

STEVEN A. EPSTEIN

THE TALENTS OF
JACOPO DA VARAGINE



A GENOESE MIND IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

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Cover image: Portal of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Photograph by George Gorse.

Not all one's time should be devoted to public issues or immersed in political questions, because it is not wise to apply oneself to transitory things but to do on this earth what will gain fruits in heaven.

Jacopo da Varagine, *Chronicle of the City of Genoa*

For we preach not ourselves . . .

2 Corinthians 4:5

. . . in sources that James of Genoa compiled into a volume almost as fascinating as the Fioretti of Saint Francis.

Henry Adams, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*

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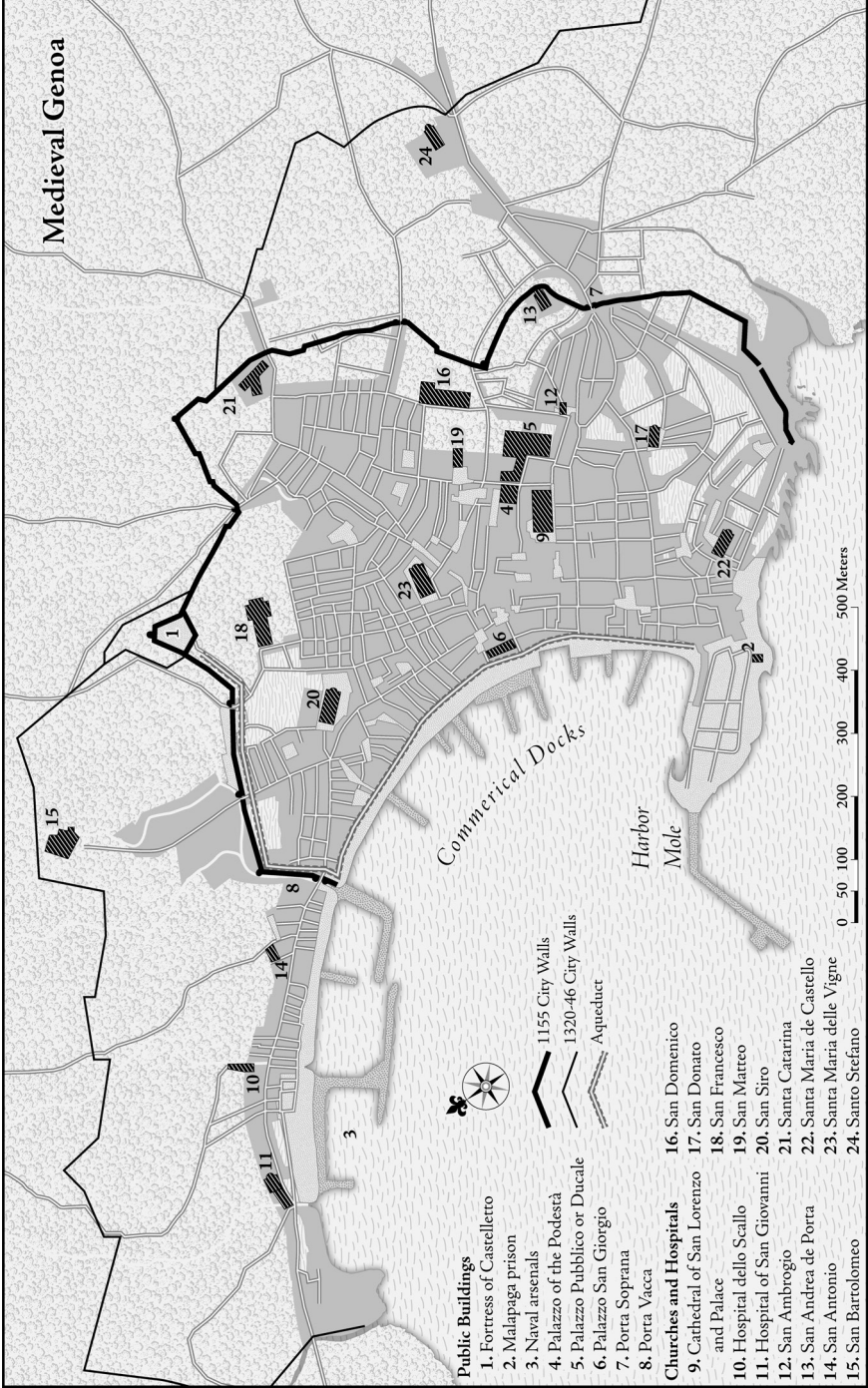
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ABBREVIATIONS

- ASG, CN Archivio di Stato di Genova, Cartolari Notarili
- BdeT Bartholomew of Trent, *Liber Epilogorum in Gesta Sanctorum*, ed. Emore Paoli (Florence, 2001).
- CG *Iacopo da Varagine e la sua Cronaca di Genova: dalle origini al MC-CXCVII*, ed. Giovanni Monleone, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 84–85 (Rome, 1941).
- JdeB John of Belet, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Herbert Douteil (Turnhout, 1976).
- LA Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni Monleone, 2nd ed. (Florence, 1998).
- LA2 Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda aurea con la miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, trans. Francesco Stella et al. (Florence, 2007).
- SD *Sermones Dominicales per totum annum* (Venice, 1586).
- SM *Mariale sive sermones de beata Maria virgine* (Paris, 1503).
- SQ Iacopo da Varazze, *Sermones Quadrigesimales*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence, 2005).
- SS *Sermones de sanctis per anni totius circulum* (Venice, 1573).



Map by Darin Grauberger.

THE TALENTS OF JACOPO DA VARAGINE

Prologue

Jacopo da Varagine is not known to most people who have heard of Aquinas or Dante or St. Francis, to name three well-known Italians of the thirteenth century.¹ *The Golden Legend*, by far his most famous work, has been intensely studied and translated into many languages.² This collection of saints' lives and other essays, surviving in many hundreds of manuscript copies (and variants) in Latin, was translated into German, Occitan, French, Italian, English, Dutch, Spanish, and other languages by the end of the Middle Ages and was one of the earliest and most frequently printed books from the late fifteenth century. Yet like *many* texts, it has become detached from its context, the city of Genoa, where Jacopo was probably born, passed much of his life, and died as its archbishop in 1298. Also, except for a few Genoese scholars, the study of this text occurs without any notice of his other works, the many hundreds of sermons and

1. I use this version of his name, preferable to the numerous other ways he appears in scholarly works and catalogues in Latin (Jacobus or Iacobus de Voragine), Italian (Jacopo, Giacomo, or Iacopo da Varazze), English (James), and many other variants.

2. Some of the translations are adequate, but in this book all translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. An outstanding complete translation by William Granger Ryan, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (Princeton, 1993), provides no scholarly apparatus or notes on Jacopo's sources.

his history of Genoa.³ These circumstances justify a new approach to Jacopo that encompasses all his works and his social and cultural milieu. What exactly this book is will be explained in a moment, as soon as I make clear that it is not a biography, intellectual or otherwise, of Jacopo da Varagine. The materials for such a life do not exist, as I shall show by briefly summarizing the little we know about him.⁴

Jacopo was born, most likely in Genoa, in late 1228 or 1229.⁵ Most of what we know derives from the rare personal comments in his history of Genoa. These will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5. Jacopo remembered an eclipse of 1239, when he was a boy. He entered the Dominican order in 1244, in many ways the decisive event of his life.⁶ A near contemporary made a will in Genoa when entering the Order of Preachers, ending his ties to his family, and Jacopo may have done the same, though his will does not survive.⁷ As far as we know he was first educated in the Dominican convent and its *studium generale* in Genoa.⁸ Stefania Bertini Guidetti reasonably

3. To note one example of many, Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, ed., *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), mentions Jacopo only as the author of *The Golden Legend* and does not notice him as a historian. A partial exception is the recent book by Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy* (Berlin, 2013), strong on the Lenten sermons, less so on the other works and the Genoese milieu.

4. There is, however, a book by the eminent librarian and theologian Ernest Richardson Cushing, *Materials for a Life of Jacopo da Varagine* (New York, 1935), but no subsequent biography appeared. Carla Casagrande offers a useful summary in her “Iacopo Da Varazze,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 2004). She mentions and describes all the works investigated here, as well as some minor or spurious pieces not relevant to this book’s purposes.

5. For these details I draw on Giovanni Monleone’s introduction to his edition of Jacopo’s history, CG, 3–91; Stefania Bertini Guidetti’s introduction to her edition of *Cronaca della città di Genova dalle origini al 1297* (Genoa, 1995), 9–18; and a general biography, Gabriella Airaldi, *Jacopo da Varagine: tra santi e mercanti* (Genoa, 1998). “Varagine” is the most common medieval word for the name of the small city now known as Varazze, on the coast of the Riviera Ponente not far from Genoa. Many Genoese bore toponyms that record their places of ultimate origin long after the family had moved to Genoa. Nothing in Jacopo’s work shows any particular attachment to Varazze. For what can be done with more sources for another urban church and its leaders, see the excellent book by George Dameron, *Florence and Its Church in the Age of Dante* (Philadelphia, 2005). Caroline Bruzelius, *Preaching, Building and Burying: Friars and the Medieval City* (New Haven, 2014) looks at the Franciscans and Dominicans and the social lives of their buildings (181) in the main cities of Italy, but not Genoa, where the medieval Dominican church no longer exists and the Franciscan one has changed beyond recognition.

6. See a standard work on the order, William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order* (New York, 1966–73), 2:19–98, for the order’s schools and houses of study across Europe; and for a European perspective with recent references, Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge, 2009), 21–43.

7. ASG, CN, Cart. N. 16 parte II, 64v, August 4, 1229; Ponzio made this testament in the Dominican chapter house in Genoa.

8. For context on Dominican education, see Ronald G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2012), 405–10, but nothing on Genoa, and for conventual education M. Michèle Mulchahey, “First the Bow Is Bent in Study”: *Domestic Education before 1500* (Toronto, 1998), 130–218.

suggests that Jacopo attended from 1246 to 1251 the *studium generale* the Dominican order operated at Bologna.⁹ Jacopo recalled the great comet in the summer of 1264. After compiling the core of *The Golden Legend* over the years 1260–67, he became prior of the Dominicans in Lombardy, centered in Milan, for the period from 1267 to 1277, probably the same time as he wrote many of his model sermons for preachers. He attended the General Chapters of the Dominican order in 1267 at Bologna, 1271 at Montpellier, 1273 at Pest, 1274 at Lyon, 1277 at Venice, and Bordeaux in 1281 where he left office. Spending some time in Pest seems to have interested Jacopo in Hungary and its saints and miracles. At these meetings he had the chance to meet the great men of his order, including Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, but there is no proof that he did so. Back in another official capacity at a general meeting at Bologna in 1281, he also spent the 1280s writing two of his great collections of sermons, the Lenten and Sunday books. In 1283/84 he was briefly regent of the Dominican order, and he spent most of this decade in Bologna with frequent travels to Rome, Genoa, and elsewhere.

In 1292 Pope Nicholas IV made Jacopo archbishop of Genoa. It is unclear why Nicholas granted the Genoese petition to have an archbishop at this time, since the see had been vacant for about four years.¹⁰ The pope died before conferring the pallium. The details of Jacopo's career as archbishop are few because almost nothing survives recording his activities in office, apart from what he provides in his chronicle, a few papal letters, and a handful of notarial acts concerning his extended family and official business. For example, we do not have a single letter by Jacopo, and the episcopal register from this period did not survive the vicissitudes of Genoese history. He wrote one last body of sermons while archbishop, all on Mary. Major buildings housing important institutions of church and state—the Dominican convent, the cathedral of San Lorenzo and the adjoining palace, the Palazzo Pubblico, in the heart of the port—were all within a few hundred meters of one another and comprised Jacopo's neighborhood, where he was born. He was dead by the morning of July 14, 1298, probably passing away the previous night. Jacopo would have been around seventy. From these basic facts

9. Stefania Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Jacopo da Varazze: Il potere delle immagini nel Duecento* (Florence, 1998), 31. The author explains (2) that she uses this (yet another!) name for Jacopo in order to conform to the rules of the series in which this book appeared. See also her "Scrittura, oralità, memoria: La *Legenda aurea* fonte e modello nei *Sermones* e nella *Chronica civitatis ianuensis* di Jacopo da Varagine," in the excellent collection *De la sainteté à l'hagiographie: Genèse et usage de la Légende dorée*, ed. Barbara Fleith and Franco Morenzoni (Geneva, 2001), 123–38.

10. Jacopo knew that the patriarch of Antioch, Opizo Fieschi, the nephew of two popes, administered the see during most of the vacancy.

and a few others biographers have produced accounts of his life of varying length and quality.

Given how little we know about Jacopo, it is reasonable to turn to the great mass of his writings to learn how he thinks about Christianity, his main preoccupation. Jacopo's extreme personal reticence and the lack of particularities in his sermons make this task difficult. I am not the first person to wonder about Jacopo's mind. Bertini Guidetti, studying the sermons, concluded that his tendency toward impersonality needed to be balanced against the "inexhaustible evidence of the process of elaborating ideas and mental associations this notable artistic personality" exhibits.¹¹ "A gallery of portraits animates the sermons and furnishes the warp and woof on which he weaves a complex and continuous pattern of metaphors, similes, analogies." Derived from intense study of the sermons, these views apply well to Jacopo's other works, as we will see. His readers, past and present, have been struck by his ability to take a few details or an idea and spin out a complex web of associations.¹² I agree that Jacopo, while writing in an intellectual tradition he was usually careful to credit, also thought of himself as an artist, in the sense that he applied his creative and imaginative talents to his subjects, be they a biblical passage as a topic for a sermon, the life of a saint, or the history of Genoa. Bertini Guidetti saw Jacopo's portraits as a way to take a close look at what she called his system of presentation, as part of an approach to his imagination situated in the history of mentalities.¹³ Hence her approach to the way Jacopo thought is primarily concerned with how he used his cultural tools and his imaginative skills to convey abstractions to his audience. I have greatly benefited from Bertini Guidetti's fine work.

Jacopo was, after all, one of the most active and talented minds of his time, but not the only one. His writing reveals how his mind worked, but this truism applies to nearly every honest person who writes. Because Jacopo was

11. Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Jacopo da Varazze*, 51–54, for this and what follows. Most readers of the sermons will agree that "inexhaustible" aptly describes Jacopo's ability to multiply categorical distinctions.

12. Every chapter in this book provides examples of how Jacopo could ask three questions, or provide six examples, or record twelve characteristics of an idea.

13. As inspired by Jacques Le Goff and familiar to English readers in his *Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1988). Jacques Le Goff, *A la recherche du temps sacré: Jacques de Voragine et la Légende dorée* (Paris, 2011) provides this eminent historian's views on Jacopo, in his case taking up another of his enduring themes, time. I will look at this issue in chapter 2, but note for now that Le Goff does not consider the Genoese milieu for the one work by Jacopo he studies, he pays almost no attention to the other books, and he is not concerned with Jacopo's originality, except on time.

so reticent about his personal life, because his contemporaries have almost nothing to say about him, and because, as we will see, his use of sources, what he read or heard, is at times impenetrable, a standard biography simply will not work. Some thirteenth-century writers reveal so much about themselves or were the subjects of a near contemporary biography that their opus can sustain a “life and times.” For example, Jacopo’s contemporary the Catalan Raimund Lull (ca. 1232–1316), whose life and many works have been intensely studied, frequently visited Genoa and experienced a profound spiritual crisis there in 1292/93, when Jacopo was archbishop.¹⁴ Even though Lull was actually for a time in 1293 living in the Dominican house in Genoa and thinking of joining the order, there is no evidence that he and Jacopo paid any attention to one another, though we can imagine that some interaction must have occurred. This intersection of lives and experiences led Lull to leave Genoa by ship for missionary work in Tunis and Jacopo to the task of compiling sermons on Marian themes while busy as archbishop. Lull’s huge number of surviving works, his lay status, and the immense amount of scholarship on him all suggest he would not be a profitable comparison to Jacopo’s very different career.

For these and other reasons I have turned to Richard Southern’s study of Jacopo’s near contemporary Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (ca. 1170–1253), as an inspiring model for this book.¹⁵ Southern subtitled his book *The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe*. The parallels between Grosseteste and Jacopo are far from exact (more below), but I take from Southern’s great book on an important person a few ideas for a lesser work on a less significant figure. First, whatever we can suppose or say about the distinctive qualities of an English mind in this century, I believe Jacopo had a “Genoese mind.” This highly educated and successful Dominican shared some traits with his one hundred thousand or so fellow Genoese but more so with the few hundred men appearing in the vast notarial records or the few dozen writers (mostly annalists or historians). Like all medieval Europeans having significant careers, these men and women had an aptitude for hard work and ambitions to achieve something worthwhile, in Jacopo’s case to serve God. More typically Genoese is his special manner of disliking Jews in a Genoa where there were none, by design. On the positive side Jacopo’s

14. Fernando Domínguez and Jordi Gayà, “Life,” in *Raimundus Lullus: An Introduction to His Life, Works and Thought*, ed. A. Fidora and J. E. Rubio (Turnhout, 2008), 73–75.

15. Richard W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1986).

contemporaries shared a love of tidiness and system, a desire to bring order out of chaos, whether in business or faith. It cannot be a coincidence that the greatest collection of saint's lives and the most important Latin dictionary of the Middle Ages were written by Genoese Dominicans. Second, Jacopo was a widely read and well-traveled Dominican preacher comfortable in the academic and spiritual milieu of Europe. Hence we must balance the particularly Genoese with the wider context of European intellectual life in the late thirteenth century, just as Southern situated Grosseteste in the first half of the century. Lastly, since historians study change over time and we have Jacopo's writings from nearly four decades, we must consider to what extent his mind grew, or he extended his intellectual horizons, over the course of his career.

This book is not a comparative study of Jacopo to anyone else, so we can briefly note here, and then leave behind, some contrasts between Robert Grosseteste and Jacopo da Varagine. These similarities and differences set the parameters for what we can learn about the way Jacopo thought, the real subject of this book. Jacopo's education outside Genoa is unknown, so we have a university gap (likely at Bologna), where Robert's education has been reasonably surmised to have occurred at Oxford and Paris. Jacopo was a well-traveled person knowing much of Europe; Robert knew England (a place Jacopo never visited) and the roads to Paris and Rome. Their European minds reflect these experiences of the world. Jacopo was careful to list all his writings, while Robert's oeuvre is plagued with misattributions and spurious writings. Jacopo rose to be archbishop of Genoa and Robert to be bishop of Lincoln, the largest and richest diocese in England. Both men were active preachers, but we have only a few of Robert's sermons and hundreds of Jacopo's. Apart from religion, Jacopo was most interested in history and became a father of social history, Robert in natural science; neither wrote on the other's favorite subject. Robert became a learned pioneer in Greek and could translate works from that language, while Jacopo (possibly to his disappointment and a definite handicap) never learned it. Jacopo was a Dominican from his teens, and Robert was very close to the Franciscans in Oxford, though he never joined the order. As we will see Jacopo had acquired the habits of a scholastic mind; Robert remained resolutely apart from this new method of analysis and argument. Jacopo revered Pope Innocent IV (1243–54) from the noble Fieschi family of Genoa and Lavagna; Robert had terrible relations with Innocent and probably loathed him.¹⁶ Both men had an

16. For more on this pope, see Alberto Melloni, *Innocenzo IV: La concezione e l'esperienza della cristianità come regimen unius personae* (Genoa, 1990).

interest in daring, extrabiblical books or pseudepigrapha of great antiquity. Jacopo put a lot of faith in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and Robert used the *Testament of Judah*.¹⁷ Finally, neither one became a cardinal or was canonized, but how they responded to these facts or hopes is unknown. Several medieval efforts to canonize Robert failed; Jacopo was belatedly beatified in 1816.¹⁸

These contrasts, which we might make with any other author, episcopal or otherwise, in this century, show some of the things we can learn about Jacopo's mind by reading his writings. I cannot cover here the vast, complex subject of the reception of his works.¹⁹ In order to thoroughly investigate his writings, one must have read, or at least consulted, everything Jacopo read, claims to have consulted, or cites, and I have not done this; I am not sure anyone could. The editors of his writings have done some of this, although at present only one of his sermon collections benefits from a modern edition.²⁰ I have read enough of what Jacopo "knew" in order to have some sense of where he borrows, compiles, or is thinking on his own, and it is the last category on which I concentrate. For example, I have some sense now of how Jacopo read the Bible, a work he knew better than any other. It is another, harder matter to catch Jacopo having an original thought about a Bible passage because he was so careful to credit his respected predecessors. Also, Jacopo did not in my view esteem originality as a proper goal for a theologian, and he did not boast about having original ideas. But he did, probably more than some of his readers have thought. His thinking occurred in the context of Genoese history in the thirteenth century, set in the framework of the larger history of Europe. I have provided, where necessary, enough

17. Jacopo claimed to know a book on the Infancy of the Savior from the *Tripartite History*; see his *Sermones de sanctis per anni totius circulum* (Venice, 1573), 56r.

18. On Robert, see André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), 72, 81.

19. See for example Barbara Fleith, *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der lateinischen Legenda Aurea* (Brussels, 1991). Joachim Knappe has written on a collection of short texts on Roman history by unknown author(s) that became attached to certain German manuscript traditions of the *Legenda Aurea*; see his "Die 'Historia apocrypha' der 'Legenda Aurea,'" in *Zur Deutung von Geschichte in Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. Joachim Knappe and Karl Strobel (Bamberg, 1985), 146–65. The literature on William Caxton's 1483 edition of his English translation, itself dependant on previous works, is enormous. I am planning a separate study on the reception of Jacopo's life of St Dominic.

20. This is Iacopo da Varazze, *Sermones Quadragesimales*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence, 2005). He is also the heroic editor of the now standard edition of the *Legenda Aurea* (Florence, 1998); *Legenda aurea con la miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, trans. Francesco Stella et al. (Florence, 2007). Since all of the current English translations take as their text the older third edition by Theodor Graesse, ed., *Legenda Aurea* (1890; repr. Osnabrück, 1969), they do not have the best text or up-to-date notes.

background to make sense of Jacopo's writing. But I have tried to keep this context to a minimum, partly because Jacopo aimed in his sermons and saints' lives for a European-wide audience and hence kept his own notices of Genoa to a bare minimum. The "times" of Jacopo da Varagine have been discussed elsewhere and become one of the main subjects when we look at Jacopo as a historian.²¹

Jacopo's name does not evoke any great thesis or new teaching staking a claim to his originality as a thinker or author. Nothing he wrote or did rivaled Dante in artistry, Aquinas in theological subtlety, Lull in sheer volume, or Grosseteste in original scholarship. He worked in three genres with different touchstones of originality. What, after a thousand years of Christian preaching, was an original sermon? Jacopo disdained personal and newsy sermons. His models were supposed to aid other preachers, and amplified through them to edify congregations everywhere. He collected, selected, and edited hundreds of saints' lives. This grand idea for an encyclopedia of the saints rendered older works irrelevant and held the field for centuries. As a historian Jacopo radically departed from the annalistic conventions of his worthy Genoese predecessors. He decided that history could be more than universal or providential, but he called his work a chronicle for a reason. By pushing history beyond its thirteenth-century canons Jacopo made his most original contribution to the historiography of Genoa, a city with no particular claim on contemporary readers. Until recent centuries the least known of Jacopo's works, the small audience for the chronicle ranked far behind the many readers of *The Golden Legend* and even the comparatively fewer readers of his sermons. Jacopo's talents across genres kept him from being valued as a thirteenth-century intellectual of impressive range.

My method is to consider Jacopo first as primarily an industrious compiler, and hence experienced selector of which details to include and which to omit. Learning his habits of selection, along with noting his opinions and factual errors, is the best way to interrogate his works with the purpose of learning about the originality of his mind. The only hope for finding growth is to consider his writings in chronological order. This stance toward his writings rests on the three fresh approaches suggested above. First, we look at all his works, so when we arrive at his Marian sermons we will already know the preacher, hagiographer, and historian. Second, the Genoese

21. For the Genoese background, see my *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 96–187, and Dino Puncuh, ed., *Storia di Genova: Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico* (Genoa, 2003), 179–231. I have relied mainly on my own knowledge of Genoa and have not burdened this book with numerous references to my other book.

milieu is the touchstone by which we will be seeing and evaluating what he has to say. Third, paying more attention to the sources for his sermons, saints' lives, and history circumscribes his originality but also illuminates the traditions, mainly his faith and the Bible, shaping his imaginative and artistic powers. For these reasons I begin with chapter 1 on the sermons, then two chapters on *The Golden Legend*, then two more on his history of Genoa. I conclude with his late sermons on Mary in order to illuminate what we may understand from the growth of this Genoese mind in medieval Europe.

As the epilogue to this book shows, Jacopo's last words as an author, perhaps the final sentence he wrote, display a typically humane concern that his readers would find it easy and useful to consult his book. Jacopo solved his problem by supplying an index, presumably one he made himself. By this time in his life Jacopo's thinking had become so self-effacing that he would surely have cringed at the prospect of intense scrutiny. Certainly no near contemporary as far as we know ever wrote a book about his life. Nor do we have any evidence, apart from the huge numbers of surviving manuscripts, how audiences received Jacopo's preaching and other writings.²² He would have wondered, as readers of this book may very well ask: what possible claim does a book on the thinking of a well-intentioned but frankly obscure Genoese, dead more than seven centuries, have on busy people at the beginning of the third millennium?—a date that might have shocked Jacopo, who thought he lived close to the end. Jacopo was a type of person worthy of our consideration not simply for his numerous surviving works, for many such people have been completely and in most cases rightly forgotten. Nor does being Genoese by itself demand notice, especially far from the locale that just might by itself justify remembrance. Since Jacopo appears to have been a great reader, we cannot do justice to the ways in which he recycles the vast corpus of his lifetime's reading, let alone can we be sure that we have detected all the gold of original thinking in a fair amount of ore.

Above all these concerns, I place before the potential reader this argument for paying some attention to Jacopo da Varagine. As far as I can tell, the animating passion of his life was his Christian faith—a stance he shared with many of his contemporaries. But he was not content to hide his light under a bushel basket. He worked hard for decades, using his talents to explain to the men on the front lines of his religion, his fellow priests, friars, and preachers,

22. See Augustine Thompson, *Revival Preachers and Politics in Thirteenth-Century Italy: The Great Devotion of 1233* (Oxford, 1992) who studies the missing sermons of 1233 by looking at narrative sources describing them (22–23)—alas not possible for Jacopo.

what they needed to know to be effective in their work. Why he did this is clear enough—charitable duty. Jacopo believed, in common with other learned friars like the great theologian Aquinas and the master of the Franciscans Bonaventure, that he owed his colleagues the fruits of his talents applied to the faith. He did not write scholastic books or advice or regulations for Dominicans. Instead, he applied his energies to works of love, in the first instance for his fellow friars. But he also wanted to help anyone, religious or secular, engaged in making it easier for beginners and experienced practitioners to teach what people needed to know to be good Christians, and to a lesser and more local context to be useful citizens of Genoa. How he did it is the subject of this book; the evidence is on the pages he wrote—the relics of his thinking.

CHAPTER 1

The Preacher

It is difficult to determine the exact number of model sermons Jacopo da Varagine composed because they survive in hundreds of manuscripts, some with different counts, possibly reflecting how he or copyists may have added to some collections over time.¹ A reasonable estimate by Ferruccio Bertini claims these numbers: *Sermones de Sanctis* 305, *Sermones Dominicales* 109, *Sermones Quadragesimales* 99, *Sermones Mariales* 161. By this reckoning there are at least 674 sermons.² Jacopo da Varagine composed most of his sermons in the 1270s and 1280s when he was a rising star

1. I will from this point refer to Jacopo's sermons as plain sermons, but it is important to keep in mind that they were models, stripped of stories, personal asides, and nearly all topical references, all of which the preacher would use to embellish the model.

2. Ferruccio Bertini, "Le fonte classiche in Iacopo," in *Il Paradiso e la Terra: Iacopo da Varazze e il suo tempo*, ed. Stefania Bertini Guidetti (Florence, 2001), 61. Another collection, *Sermones de Tempore*, <http://www.sermones.net>, overlapping to some extent the others, contains 160 sermons. These numbers can differ; for example, George Ferzoco, "The Context of Medieval Collections on Saints," in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden, 2002), 279–91, drawing on the standard reference works on medieval sermons and Dominican authors by Johann Baptist Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350* (Münster, 1969–90) (vol. 43.3 lists 832 sermons) and Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi* (Rome, 197–93) (surviving manuscripts vol. 2, pp. 348–69) claims 522 Sunday sermons, 327 Lenten, 253 on saints, and 76 on Mary for a total of 1,178 sermons (284), but I think this is too

in the Dominican order in Northern Italy.³ The exception is the collection on Mary, possibly his last work when he was archbishop of Genoa in the 1290s. The epilogue will examine these sermons in the light of all Jacopo's writings.

Jacopo wrote these model sermons in Latin for his fellow preachers. He expected them to repurpose these models for the laity. As André Vauchez has observed, "But at the beginning of the thirteenth century, with very rare exceptions, no-one spoke to the faithful about God in simple, clear language."⁴ Part of the Dominican mission was to change this. Jacopo used Dominican lectionaries and other texts and compilations that taught him how to select extracts, identify his sources, and expand upon them.⁵ Michèle Mulchahey has observed that Jacopo became "the most universally respected of all thirteenth-century [Dominican] preachers."⁶ Very rarely did Jacopo address a sermon to any social group, and the exception is of course the sermons explicitly directed toward preachers.⁷ As he was also compiling the more famous *Legenda Aurea* during these years, the huge number of

high and contains many double counts. The website provides the following details for the collections I abbreviate in this way: *Sermones de Sanctis* (SS), more than 300 manuscripts; *Sermones de Tempore*, more than 350; *Sermones Quadragesimales* (SQ), more than 300; *Sermones Mariales* (SM), around 70. I use the following sources for these sermons, of which only SQ at this time benefits from a modern edition: Iacopo da Varazze, *Sermones Quadragesimales*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence, 2005). SS is *Sermones de sanctis per anni totius circulum* (Venice, 1573)—this volume claims 307 sermons; SM is *Mariale sive sermones de beata Maria virgine* (Paris, 1503); SD is *Sermones Dominicales per totum annum* (Venice, 1586). The Dominican Rodolphe Cluyt published Jacopo's sermons in a two-volume edition, *Sermones Aurei* (Augsburg, 1760), which was the first one I read, but I have subsequently followed the experts in relying on the sixteenth-century printed books as more reliable.

3. The fundamental work on the background of his sermons is Stefania Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Iacopo da Varazze: Il potere delle immagini nel Duecento* (Florence, 1998), 1–54. By her count, 725 models for sermons survive (41).

4. André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), 343.

5. See M. B. Parkes, "The Compilation of the Dominican Lectionary," in his *Pages from the Past: Medieval Writing Skills and Manuscript Books*, ed. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Farnham, 2012), no. XIII (91–106), for astute observations on this type of labor, especially 93–94.

6. M. Michèle Mulchahey, "First the Bow Is Bent in Study": *Dominican Education before 1500* (Toronto, 1998), 428. She also thinks his sermons were the most widely diffused, possibly riding the coattails of *The Golden Legend* (429).

7. The literature refers to this type of sermon as *ad status*. For a good example, see SD, 244v, directly addressed to preachers, and 155r, for a sermon on the Good Pastor, also a rare example of a thematic Sunday sermon, one nicely distinguishing between the pastor who feeds the sheep, the hireling (*mercenarius*) who shears them, and the wolf that eats them. Another sermon, SD, 306r, on one of his favorite themes, avarice, comes close to a direct sermon for merchants when it notices fairs as places catering to the avaricious. See Jean-Paul Boyer, "Prediche e sentenze a Napoli intorno al 1300: il modello del logoteta Bartolomeo di Capua," *Rassegna storica salernitana* 62 (2014): 39–81, for the unusual juridical sermons given by the logothete Bartolomeo of Capua. These sermons accompanied royal or judicial decisions.

sermons on the saints is no surprise. The sermons on the saints, however, contain none of the stories or personal details that make *The Golden Legend* such an important book. Yet in both works Jacopo wrote about Thomas of Canterbury without mentioning England or King Henry II.⁸ In these sermons Jacopo detaches the saints from their historical context and confines himself to long analyses of their spiritual virtues and their many meanings. In this collection on the saints (unlike *SD*, three for every Sunday) he had no fixed number of sermons by topic, so his favorite subjects are an early glimpse at his preferences.⁹ Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nine; Nativity, nine; All Souls, eight; St. Michael the Archangel, seven; Pentecost, seven; Good Friday, seven; Annunciation, seven; Epiphany, six; Last Supper, six; Ascension, six; St. Dominic, six; All Saints, six; St. John the Baptist, six.

Ostensibly on the saints, this collection, like *The Golden Legend*, shows that Jacopo was from the start more interested in the church feasts than individual saints. Parochial obligations to organize feast days may have predisposed Jacopo to favor them. But from the beginning of his career to the very end, Mary was his favorite subject. Yet how revealing is it that the saint receiving the most sermons, Michael, was not a human being? From the time Jacopo entered the order, his education and experiences as a Dominican shaped the way he thought about everything. As we will see, John the Baptist's relics in Genoa always attracted Jacopo's notice; he literally grew up near them. There is an overlap between these sermons and the lives of the saints; a few obscure saints have no sermons, but the only recent saints receiving notice, like Francis, Dominic, and Peter Martyr, are in both works. Jacopo also leaned heavily on his favorite reading for models of sermons, and he saw his great predecessors as Peter in Acts 2:13–46, Paul in Acts 13:16–41, Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and Bernard of Clairvaux, with many other preachers, martyrologies, previous lives, histories, and any other source he could find in lesser roles. Like all good preachers Jacopo saw himself as a humble part of a long and venerable tradition stretching back to Jesus. Looking for his distinctive habits of thought in this genre is difficult because originality was not automatically a prized virtue, and borrowing from others, acknowledged or not, was a common strategy.

The sermons on the saints or church feasts, ideally preached on the calendar date, proclaimed their subjects and left Jacopo free to work up

8. See chapter 4 for Thomas in the *Legenda Aurea*, and for sermons on Thomas in *SS*, 58r–62v.

9. These numbers derive from *SS*; many saints have five sermons, and Francis has four. There is nothing on St. Elizabeth in this collection, so perhaps he was working on it before his trip to Hungary in 1273.

whatever themes he wanted, within the parameters of his topic. His Sunday sermons take up subjects rather than scriptural passages, though a Sunday like Easter inevitably demanded sermons on the meaning of the Resurrection and related themes. On an ordinary Sunday, as for example the third one after Easter, Jacopo took as his themes the four statuses of the servants of the Lord, the patience of women, and the marriage between Christ and his church.¹⁰ Or, Jacopo might find the opportunity to suggest a sermon on one of his favorite subjects, as he did for the second sermon on the Sunday after the octave of Epiphany, in this case the three forms of marriage.¹¹ For the Lenten sermons Jacopo took as the subject the passage of scripture from the calendar, but as we will see below, Jacopo was able to elaborate upon the ostensible subject of a scriptural verse or incident and take it in some novel directions. One would not expect to read in a sermon on the Circumcision a long and possibly original scholastic discussion of the color of Jesus' eyes.¹²

No matter how Jacopo compiled a thematic, topical, or calendric collection of sermons, Stefania Bertini Guidetti has made clear how the manual by Humbert of Romans (ca. 1194–1277) on how to preach shaped the way Jacopo wrote a model sermon.¹³ Learning how to preach was of course one of the mainstays of a Dominican education, and Jacopo may have been inspired by any number of master preachers; he knew sermons by those inside and outside his order. Manuals on preaching and constructing sermons were ubiquitous. Bertini Guidetti, the expert on Jacopo's sermons, has found that he took the standard approach of first noting a protheme, in a way the occasion for the sermon.¹⁴ This occasion might be the saint whose day this was or a set biblical verse (almost invariably from the New Testament). Every sermon had a main theme or subject, which Jacopo usually divided into elaborate divisions and subdivisions as the topic warranted. His taste for expanding into subcategories of subcategories is characteristic of all

10. *SD*, 168r–174v.

11. *SD*, 41r, 43r, where another typical subtheme appears: the troubling (to Jacopo, and his inspiration Bernard of Clairvaux) marriage between Moses and an Ethiopian, presumed to be black.

12. *SS*, 72r; Jacopo concludes they were a middle color, not called gray, between black eyes symbolizing humanity and white (really blue) eyes evoking divinity.

13. Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Iacopo da Varazze*, 18–25; the book in question is Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicatorum*, in *Beati Humberti de Romanis Opera de Vita Regulari*, ed. Joachim Joseph Berthier (Rome, 1888–89; repr. Turin, 1956), 2:373–484. For background, see Edward Tracy Brett, *Humbert of Romans: His Life and Views on Thirteenth-Century Society* (Toronto, 1984), 151–66. It remains an open question if Jacopo used a work he certainly knew, Humbert's lectionary, the great Dominican liturgical work: *ibid.*, 80–112, especially 87 and for text.

14. Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Iacopo da Varazze*, 44–46, again from the model by Humbert.

his sermons and seems to reflect his scholastic habits of thinking and arguing. We should be hesitant to draw conclusions from what Jacopo omitted because we cannot know his reasons. One possible exception to this rule is that the sermons do not address sodomy, possibly because Jacopo shared the view of his fellow Dominican Hugh of Saint-Cher (ca. 1200–63) that the topic should not be addressed in sermons, except very cautiously.¹⁵ Jacopo had an endless imagination for finding allegorical meanings to the most mundane biblical verses. Sometimes his choices reveal his temperaments, one way or the other. For example, when commenting on the donkey on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he found that the synagogue was a reasonable allegorical meaning of it.¹⁶ This almost endless passion for minute analysis enabled Jacopo to produce hundreds of sermons that are at the same time not repetitive but are so forgettable as to make the reader unsure about either characteristic.

Jacopo had the opportunity to explain in several prologues his reasons for compiling collections of model sermons. The introduction to the Sunday sermons, a later one, tells us what the mature Jacopo wanted us to know about his motives.¹⁷ The unpredictability of human life warned us not to lose the benefits of learning, since the Lord told us that the fruits of this life would persevere into the next. We should be working not for food that perishes, but for what remains into eternity. Jacopo was usually aware of his job as a priest and preacher, which he called work, a subject of great interest to him. The idea of not using one's talents, or wasting them, or having them forgotten, was always on Jacopo's mind. It was not a good idea to spend one's ability on things that did not last. Jacopo modestly claims that he never would have the audacity to compile these Sunday sermons, but his brothers, fellow Dominicans, asked him to do it. This standard authorial stance to a demanding audience as inspiration for writing should not mask that Jacopo loved to compile sermons. Whether or not he was a constant preacher is harder to tell, but these Dominicans eager to read what they presumably

15. *Postilla Hugonis de Sancto Charo*, ed. N. Pezzana (Venice, 1703), 7:209, col. b: "quod de tali vitio aperte loqui etiam in sermonibus non debemus, nisi valde caute." Even Sodom is rarely mentioned in sermons, as in *SQ*, no. 238, p. 233, obliquely referring to the site where Sodom and Gomorrah had been—plants growing there beautiful on the outside, corrupt inside. Hugh presided over a team of friars responsible for these commentaries on the Bible, and Pope Innocent IV made him a cardinal in 1244; see the essays in L.-J. Bataillon, G. Dahan, and P.-M. Gy, eds., *Hugues de Saint-Cher (†1263) bibliste et théologien* (Turnhout, 2004).

16. *SD*, 6r; the colt, presumably higher in status than the ass, represented the gentiles. In another Palm Sunday sermon, *SD*, 128r, he suggested that the donkey was our flesh, again a theme with many potential byways.

17. *SD*, 1r–v, for this and what follows. *SQ* has no prologue; *SM*'s is treated in the Epilogue.

heard suggest that Jacopo had tried the models out on a professional audience of fellow preachers, or ones in training.

A sermon on John the Baptist appropriately took up in detail issues of preaching and the quality of voice, suggesting Jacopo knew the performance as well as the text.¹⁸ With little wisdom and slow wits, Jacopo labored and hoped that as imperfect as his work was, the goodness of God and fraternal charity (among his readers) would compensate for the defects. Jacopo's modesty, another reason for the impersonality of the sermons, was not conventional or concealing the proverbial vanity of authors, but was in my view one of his defining traits as a man. He neatly proposed that he wrote three sermons for each Sunday in order to honor the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and the Blessed Dominic our father. Again, we see his loyalties and affections, his love of number symbolism (especially threes), and his ability to elaborate on the idea of a trinity. These sermons began with the first Sunday of Advent, as good a way as any to inaugurate a calendar and one Jacopo favored in all his works, certainly above January 1, and even above the beginning of the Genoese year at the Nativity. Finally, because he was a member of the Order of Preachers, he called on the prayers of Dominic to obtain the divine mercy he needed for this work so that it would prove useful to its readers, and praise and honor God, to his merit (and certainly not Jacopo's). Jacopo had a practical desire to respond to the wishes of his fellow Dominicans, and preachers everywhere, to compile a book that would help them in their own labors. He also wanted to honor God and to show his reverence by obtaining reward from using one's humble and God-given abilities in ways pleasing to him.

For all these reasons we must adopt a strategy for interrogating these sermons. The sermons on the saints, which also include, for example, five sermons on the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the feast of Candlemas, are impersonal in the extreme, generally vague, and strike me as those of a preacher learning his craft. Other collections, like those for Sundays or every day in Lent, constrained Jacopo by imposing on him an obligatory theme or a standard biblical verse. Jacopo escaped the confines of the genre by supplying anywhere from one to ten sermons for a day, depending on the richness of themes and presumably his creative powers as an artist. There are no sermons specific to an event like celebrating a Genoese victory or preaching a crusade. The generic quality to the sermons must be intentional as it conforms to Jacopo's wish for an audience across Europe, as wide as

18. *SD*, 23v where Jacopo expatiates on a good preaching theme, the Baptist's voice, presumably loud.

the Dominican order, and the large numbers of surviving manuscripts are testimonies to his success.

The basic similarities among the collections, a standard length and a common set of sources, might encourage us to sample from, let us say, the set of seven hundred sermons. I do not think this is the best course for examining all the sermons, though it might prove worthwhile *within* the larger collections. Instead, I think the best plan is to take a very close look at one manageable collection, and I chose the Lenten sermons for two reasons. First, it is the only collection to benefit from a modern edition, I suspect possibly because it is a mature and revealing body of sermons on a broad theme involving many subsidiary issues. The second reason, partly deriving from the first, is that Giovanni Paolo Maggioni has identified and indexed the massive number (or nearly all) of the citations to the Bible in the sermons, as well as the other sources. The earliest manuscripts and printed books of the sermons contain many notices to these quotations or paraphrases in the text, and it was Jacopo's habit to cite by book and chapter, as Genesis 1, but not the verse. In some manuscripts, and in the early printed books, these notes also often appear in the margin, but not always. As will become apparent in our study of the Lenten sermons, I have concluded that the most revealing feature of Jacopo's sermons is what they tell us about how he understood the Bible. Hence I discuss lists of his favorite Bible passages and the like, work only possible because of Maggioni's indices. Hence *SQ* is the touchstone for the study of the sermons, with the other collections deployed where necessary to make clear what the main text may omit. This approach, which concedes that studying the sermons is a necessary prologue to any effort to understand Jacopo's mind, does not allow their sheer bulk to overwhelm everything else he wrote.¹⁹

Jacopo's sermons are merely one body of work in a truly massive record of preaching in the Middle Ages. The eminent scholar of medieval sermons David d'Avray was one of the first to approach the sermon as a historical source by looking at themes across collections by many preachers, as opposed to the silo method of considering only one.²⁰ Jussi Hanska,

19. Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy* (Berlin, 2013) also uses *SQ*, but the focus is on philology and Florence. A sermon from *SQ* is translated on 206–8, but with no attention to its possible sources or context.

20. David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print* (Oxford, 2001). Though Jacopo preached on the wedding at Cana, I have not seen a proper marriage sermon in his works. See also d'Avray's fundamental *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985). D'Avray has some astute remarks on *The Golden Legend* (in *Preaching of the Friars*, 70–71), but Jacopo as preacher was not his subject. Jacopo certainly knew the works of Jacques de Vitry and Stephen of Bourbon, so he knew what came under Parisian influence, though there is no sign he was ever there.

applying this method and faced with an estimate of at least 140,000 surviving medieval sermons in Latin, also argued for studying a specific day or a theme, or both, as in the case of the second Sunday after Epiphany and its topic, the wedding at Cana.²¹ The sermon as subject has become virtually its own field, sermonology, with specialists, journals (for example, *Medieval Sermon Studies*), and all the panoply of academic respectability, for example a scholarly organization, the Sermon Studies Society, a monograph series from Brill, and handbooks introducing the genre to beginning scholars or people wanting to use the source for other purposes.²² An outsider benefits from how scholars have organized and explained their sources, making them available to become part of a broader study. (In the same way I have learned from many scholars working in the venerable fields of medieval hagiography and historiography.) Our interest in Jacopo's sermons is that they were among the first surviving works by a Genoese mind, whose context we can appreciate, and who certainly reached a large number of readers in his own and subsequent centuries. Experts on the medieval sermon are far better trained than I am to study Jacopo in the context of other medieval preachers, and this work is being done. As the prologue explained, our interest is in Jacopo as a Genoese mind, and his sermons in the context of his other books.

Before looking at Jacopo's Lenten sermons, let us note another preacher, Federico Visconti (ca. 1200–77), archbishop of Pisa from 1252 to his death. A single manuscript copy of his 106 sermons survived the Middle Ages, nearly all actual full-length sermons, preached at a specific time and place, all in Latin, but some note they were delivered in the vernacular.²³ At almost every point these sermons, by a legally minded priest who was not a friar, differ from Jacopo's. Federico's Pisa permeates these sermons, which are topical, contemporary, and filled with details on his well-known activities as archbishop. He began his priestly career in 1230 as a chaplain to Cardinal

21. Jussi Hanska, "Reconstructing the Mental Calendar of Medieval Preaching: A Method and its Limits," in Muessig, *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience*, 299, that the 140,000, perhaps half Sunday sermons, is itself too low.

22. I have found the work of a leading authority in English, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2000), helpful, especially the contributions of Augustine Thompson on preaching in general and Carlo Delcorno on preaching in Italy 1200–1500.

23. See *Les sermons et la visite pastorale de Federico Visconti archevêque de Pise (1253–1277)*, ed. Nicole Bériou et al. (Rome, 2001), a vast and impressive work with a fine introduction. Visconti's own prologue (328) says simply that these are his sermons, and nothing on the purpose of the collection. Humbert of Romans recalled hearing that at the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III preached on Mary Magdalene by using a Latin homily of Gregory the Great, translating it word for word into the vernacular for his audience. Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicatorum*, 397.

Sinibaldo Fieschi of Genoa, later Pope Innocent IV, someone Jacopo greatly admired. Federico may have used *The Golden Legend* for his sermon on Augustine, but he never names it.²⁴ These sermons were forgotten outside Pisa and had no effect on preaching in the later Middle Ages. After we have explored Jacopo's sermons, however, we will be able to use these as a counterpoint highlighting some original and common features between the two men.

Let us turn now to a close reading of the Lenten sermons, not expecting to learn anything about Jacopo's life or Genoese history, but to see a middle-aged Dominican mind tackling the job of providing model sermons for others. The drawback of the model sermon in Jacopo's case is that he left the fleshing out of the basic outline to other preachers with illustrative stories and details, the medieval exempla in their many collections by famous writers like Jacques de Vitry and Stephen of Bourbon.²⁵ Jacopo rarely gave any edifying anecdotes or examples in these sermons. I think he saw that kind of topicality as something the preacher on the spot was in the best position to include. He was not averse to drawing on collections of exempla by famous thirteenth-century authors of such compendia, though not for the early prosaic collections like his sermons on the saints. Jacopo saw his role as providing a basic structure that a preacher could personalize and contextualize as he saw fit. He offered no guidance on how to accomplish this.

The Lenten Sermons

Ninety-eight Lenten sermons fall into a classic series of paired sermons adhering to the themes and gospel passages appropriate to the season and day.²⁶ They supply us with enough data to look systematically at these sermons in order to continue searching for the ways his mind worked. In order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this source, it is best to begin with an exemplary sermon, the one below on an episode from John's gospel.

24. Visconti, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, 38, 210.

25. Humbert of Romans also provided a short collection of exempla organized by themes, in this case types of fear; see his *De dono timoris*, ed. Christine Boyer (Turnhout, 2008). This *summa de exemplis* shows another contemporary preference for the biblical books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus (287).

26. Corbari, *Vernacular Theology*, 194–203, has a very useful table comparing the choices of themes by biblical passages for the Lenten sermons or commentary by Jacopo, Giordano of Pisa (ca. 1260–1310), and Jacopo Passavanti (ca. 1300–57). The table illustrates the artistic license of preachers within the rules of the liturgical calendar and preaching manuals.

I selected this sermon at random, but its attention to what Jesus was writing, the only such instance in the Bible, made it rise to the top of the list.²⁷ These sermons are in Latin and are only about ten minutes long. It is reasonable to presume they are models or polished outlines intended for Jacopo's fellow preachers. He was a careful reader of other peoples' sermons, so he clearly wanted this body of work to find readers across Europe, and he was successful in this, though the popularity of the sermons into the age of print may owe more to their author's reputation for other works like *The Golden Legend* than for their sparkling originality.

Sunday Sermon 1. The scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–3).²⁸

These scribes were always looking for a way to trick Jesus into giving a sermon so that they could defame him and stir up the people against him, as in this case, in which there are three different types of persons—Pharisees, Christ, and the woman.

There were two characteristics of Pharisees: offering deceptive praise and asking false questions. The praise was deceptive when they called him master. Chrysostom: “They called him master so that as if honored he would open up to them the secret of his heart. This is hypocrisy of the first order—false praise.”²⁹ Christ received this praise from his disciples, John 13 [:13] “You call me master and Lord and you say well,” because he knew they spoke to honor him. He did not want such praise from these Pharisees, knowing that they said it to tempt him. Flatterers are like scorpions and bees. The scorpion with its face applauds you, and stings with its tail. Bees bring honey with their

27. Potential other choices were sermons on alms, demons, fevers, and sheep, all subjects on which Jacopo had a lot to say.

28. SQ, 255–60. This passage from John is not the subject of any Sunday Lenten sermon in *SD*. He cited the Bible by book and chapter; numbering of verses was a sixteenth-century innovation added throughout this book. I offer a faithful literal translation, trying to balance making it comprehensible while conveying some sense of Jacopo's flat Latin style. I check his biblical references against *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, ed. B. Fischer et al. (Stuttgart, 1975) and consulted the *King James Version* and the *New American Bible*.

29. Maggioni did not find the source of this quotation from Chrysostom, who in his Homilies on John does not comment on this parable. John Chrysostom, *Homiliae LXXXVIII in Joannem*, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 59 (Paris, 1862). A search of the Brepols databases reveals that Aquinas cited Chrysostom for these phrases earlier in the century, and Rabanus Maurus, who may have been his source, did so as well in the ninth; Brepols Library of Latin Texts, accessed December 13, 2013. This will be a common problem with Jacopo: what does he cite and where did he read it? At least he intended to credit the words to the original source, and not the intermediaries, but where he read them is unclear. Hence caution on the subject of Jacopo's originality.

mouths but sting with their hindquarters. These types of people praise you to your face and slander you behind your back. They are also like Sirens—sea fish having the face of a woman as it says in the Gloss on Isaiah 13 [:32], Sirens in the temples of desire, who sing sweetly and make sailors fall asleep and so suffer shipwreck.

But the wise sailors close their ears and avoid the danger. So also the wise shut their ears against such flatterers and do not hear them. Jerome: “We, hurrying to our home in heaven, ought to be deaf to the song of the Sirens.” For no one in this world should wish to be praised for his life present, past, or future. For if he is looking to the past life he will find himself having done many things which ought to make him blush. Romans 6 [:21] “For what fruit did you have in those things for which you now blush?” If you are looking in the present life you are in a place of exile about which you ought to greatly mourn: Psalm [120:5] “Woe is me because I dwell far away” namely exile. “I have lived with the inhabitants of Kedar” namely danger, because he lives with damned people. Kedar means the underworld. If you are looking to the future life, you will find the judgment of God over you, which you ought to fear greatly. Psalm [119:120] “I fear your judgments.” Therefore no one in this life should want to be praised; afterwards he has much cause for shame, grief, and fear. Those, however, who are securely in their homeland, are able to be praised, since they neither have anything from the past to blush about, since they are in every way in holiness. Neither concerning the present should they mourn, since they are in complete joy. Nor about the future do they have anything to fear, since they are in eternal rest.

Secondly, the Pharisees had asked a false question when they said, “Master, the woman was caught in adultery etc.” They said this, however, so that they might accuse him. In Christ there was the truth of doctrine, the gentleness of mercy, and the righteousness of justice, according to the Psalm [45:5] “Because of the truth, gentleness, and righteousness etc.” The Pharisees thought and said among themselves, “Either he will say the woman should be stoned, or not. Or he will say nothing. If he says she should be stoned, then we will mock him because he does not have the gentleness of mercy that he preaches, and for which the people admire him. If he will say that she should not be stoned but released, then we say that he does not have the righteousness of justice, and we will accuse him of being inimical to and against the commandments of God and Moses. And therefore, it is better that he

should be stoned along with the adulteress. If, however, he says nothing, then we will show that he does not have true doctrine, but because of human fear he is afraid to preach the truth." But Christ tempered his response, so that he was not able to be accused of any of these things, as it will be shown below.

In Christ, however, there were two qualities. First, mature discretion, in that he was writing on the ground with a finger. By "finger" is understood "discretion." So a judge when he hears accusers does not at once presume to give sentence, but ought to discuss and by that which he hears he ought to write in his heart, that is discreetly to inquire and to see what the facts are. So says the Gloss: "It is right for us, having heard evil strangers, not to fear to judge, but by the finger of discretion to ponder those before us." To this point that the judge should discreetly judge, he ought to follow that which is said in Daniel 5 [:26–27] "he has numbered, weighed, and punished." He ought to inquire about the number of crimes, to weigh the findings on the scales of his judgment, and having weighed them, to punish by dividing. For he ought not to punish all crimes equally, but by dividing, because the light crimes ought to be punished lightly, the medium ones moderately, and the grave ones seriously.

What was Christ writing on the ground? Ambrose says he was writing "The earth shall accuse the earth." Augustine says he was writing that which afterwards he expressed by voice, "He who is without sin etc." The Gloss says he was writing their sins, which, reading them as they left, they knew to be true. Chrysostom says that he was writing "The earth will swallow up these forsaken men."

For the Pharisees and this woman were alike in two ways, and unlike in two ways. They were similar in the weakness of their nature and much to this point the First Scripture says "The earth accuses the earth, and in their multitude of sins" and how much to this the second "He who is without sin etc." as if he says "If this is a sinner, you too are sinners." They were, however, dissimilar, because their sins were written before God. Her sins were remitted because of contrition, and therefore the other scripture finds it appropriate that God write down their sins and not hers. Those were written on the infernal ground; hers, however, because of penance were written on celestial ground. And therefore by those words the scripture agrees with what he writes, "Earth, swallow up these forsaken men." For the names of the sinners were written on the infernal earth, Jeremiah 17 [:13] "They, departing from me, shall be written on the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters."

God, however, writes the names of the saints in four places, namely in his palace, so that no one can erase them; Luke 10 [:20] “rejoice because your names are written in heaven”; in his book, so that they can never be falsified, Psalm [139:16] “In your book everyone will be written.” In his hands, so that they would never be given over to oblivion, Isaiah 49 [:16] “Behold in my hands I have engraved you; your walls are continually before my eyes.” And written in his heart, so that they will never not be loved 2 Corinthians 3 [:3] “You are the letter of Christ, written not with ink but by the spirit of the living God.”

Secondly, Christ had made the right statement when he said “He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone.” In this Christ served the righteousness of his justice, as the Gloss says “If the law orders deeds to be punished, nevertheless it does not command that they be similarly punished.” Behold complete justice, so that the just punish evils; therefore either they discharge the debt or renounce the deed or they submit to the punishment. Also, he served the custom of his mercy when he said, “No one has condemned you and neither will I condemn you.” For he also served the truth of his teaching in what is said in Matthew 9 [:13] “I want mercy and not sacrifice.”

In the woman there were two things. First, the violation of the marital bed, for that reason called adultery, and for that reason she was to be stoned. Why, however, should the woman be stoned more than the man who fornicates? Three reasons are proposed. Wisdom 23 [:33] First because she did contrary to the law of God, second because she broke faith with her husband, third because she would beget heirs foreign to her husband. Therefore the same [Wisdom 23:32] says “So every woman leaving her husband and getting an heir by another union.” For first it was incredible according to the highest law, secondly she left her husband, third she was a fornicator in adultery, and from a strange man she bore children. Augustine, however, in the *Enchiridion* answers differently, and says that the wife had four instances of sin and the man only one, and therefore the greater the crime the greater the punishment. First is the loving care of the husband. Husbands take care of their wives and not the wives their husbands. Ecclesiasticus 25 [:25] “If she walks not at your hand, she will confound you in the sight of your enemies.” Secondly, it is a disgrace and a shame to the world, because the confusion of the wife is greater when she fornicates than the husband if he had fornicated. Proverbs 12 [:4] “Rottenness in his bones is she that puts his worthi-

ness into confusion.” Third is the terror of the law, for divine and human law order that the wife be punished as a fornicator and not the man. Hence it is said, “The law of Moses orders us to stone her in this way.” Fourth is the fear of God that ought to draw her back from sin, Proverbs 15 [:29] “For the fear of the Lord turns away all men from evil.” And this alone, says Augustine, draws men back. For if they do not fear the safeguarding of the wife or the shame of the world or the laws or any punishment, they should, however, fear an offense to God.

Secondly, God had great compassion for the woman because he imposed no penance on her, but said this much to her, “Go and sin no more.” For he saw that she had enough contrition that it sufficed for satisfaction. However, it does not suffice for others that this sin is forgiven without satisfaction, as Gregory shows in his *Pastoralia* by three examples. The first is because if anyone writes false letters or documents, it does not later suffice that he stopped writing if what was badly written is not erased. Our sins in the sight of God are written as Jeremiah 17 [:1] “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a diamond point.” Therefore it does not suffice that anyone who no longer sins does not wash away with tears and contrition what he evilly did. For such writing is not able to be washed better than through the water of tears, Psalm [6:7] “I will wash my bed every night etc. [with my tears].” The second example is that if anyone shall have uttered blasphemies to another, it does not suffice if he did not make satisfaction later for the things about which he spoke evilly. When anyone sins, then he blasphemes God: Romans 2 [:24] “The name of God is blasphemed by you etc.” For it is not sufficient that anyone, speaking these blasphemies of sinners, does not reproach himself and repent these things he did before God. Job 42 [:6] “Therefore I rebuke myself and I repent in dust and ashes.” The third example is because the debtor is not absolved from the debts he contracted, for God does not forgive him if he does not fulfill what he has contracted. When we sin, then we are debtors to God. We are not absolved, however, from the debts of sinners for what they owe us, if we do not worthily satisfy to God those debts we owe him. We seek daily to be absolved from these debts when we say in prayer, “And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” [Matt. 6:12].

In the Roman liturgy this pericope was read on the third Saturday of Lent.

A Close Look at This Sermon

One day Jacopo da Varagine sat down to write a sermon on this passage from John. In general he understood, as a preacher, that his predecessors had been considering this episode for a thousand years and he was unlikely to add any new or startling insight to the accumulated exegesis. Nor would he particularly want to, because the purpose of his sermon was partly to stay in the traditional mainstream and not wander into novelty. Jacopo would bring to this task his own context as a prominent Dominican and then archbishop of Genoa in the late thirteenth century. Part of this context was to never use the pronoun “I” to draw attention to himself or his opinions.

This episode of the woman caught in adultery touched upon some of Jacopo’s favorite topics appearing across his many writings. First, he was passionately interested in the moral questions surrounding a Christian marriage and would not miss the chance to discuss and hammer home the spiritual lessons he found in marriage.³⁰ Second, one of the main sins sometimes afflicting marriage was adultery, and Jacopo marinated his audience in this theme. Third, taking one step from marriage, Jacopo had strong opinions about women and their place in society. Fourth, he situated women in the family and he understood, unlike some modern paternalists, that there was more to the place of women in society than their roles in the family. Fifth, Jacopo spent much of his life writing or dictating, and he was unlikely to skip over the only instance in scripture where Jesus wrote anything at all. Jacopo understood the power of the written and spoken word; he spent his career employing both tools.

Jacopo was a well-educated priest with a wide stock of memorized biblical passages and a deep reading in the church fathers as well as the best of his near contemporaries like Aquinas.³¹ It seems reasonable to suppose that the first source to which he would turn would be the great Ordinary Gloss of the Bible.³² He had probably been using this massive compilation of biblical exegesis since his student days in Genoa and Bologna, and it would be the logical place to search for the received wisdom on John’s gospel. Perhaps he

30. Jacopo returned to marriage wherever possible, even in the context of the parable of the great supper (Luke 14:16–24), where he is very interested in the man who has married and uses that as an excuse not to come, *SD*, 220r.

31. For some of what was available to read in the convent of Santa Maria de Castello in Jacopo’s time, see Giovanna Petti Balbi, “Il libro nella società genovese del sec. XIII,” *La Bibliofilia* 80 (1978): 6–7, 45.

32. I use the *Glossa Ordinaria* (Venice, 1603), cols. 1153–58, for this verse from John.

remembered fairly well what authors and ideas the Gloss preserved. This text usually presented a mystical interpretation first, and in this case took as the starting point that the woman signified the synagogue, hence the Jews. As we will repeatedly see, Jacopo disliked Jews and ordinarily would not miss the opportunity to deprecate them. Higher still than antisemitism in his priorities was a basic aversion to mysticism or an anagogical reading of the Bible. Jacopo had an orderly scholastic mind and was not given to emotional flights in matters of faith. As soon as the Gloss turned from the mystical meaning it provided a short extract from Augustine where he focuses on the physical scene. Jesus is sitting on the ground, writing with his finger in the dirt. Augustine suggests something of the teacher here and likes the broader image that the old law had been written on sterile stone (evoking Moses and the tablets of Sinai) while the new law was on soil or dirt, which must mean something. The next extract is from Alcuin, who directly addresses this question and observes that this earth symbolizes the human heart, where Jesus will write his new law.

If Jacopo opened another manuscript before he began his project, the odds are he would consult a favorite text, *The Golden Chain* by Thomas Aquinas.³³ This work, building on the Gloss, was a large exegesis of the four Gospels, often with a more extensive search of authorities, usually linked together by Aquinas's own observations, hence the idea of a chain. It appears that Aquinas also began with the Gloss, but his extracts from the authorities are often longer, showing that he went back to the original sources for a broader context. Aquinas extended his quotations to other preachers, and perhaps he is the one who led Jacopo to the homilies on John by John Chrysostom.³⁴ For these other writers, it is often hard or impossible to tell if Jacopo knew them directly or only through Aquinas. This is a familiar problem to any traditional body of scholarship. The next generation inherits the gaps and can fill them, a modest task, with original work. But we must remember that surrounding these gaps was the great edifice of received wisdom. Jacopo might have learned something Augustine wrote, for example, from dozens of writers between him and Augustine, or he might have read him directly. For a busy author like Jacopo, distillers of vast bodies of learning, like Aquinas or the glossators or encyclopedists, were invaluable.

33. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea in Quatuor Evangelia*, ed. Angelici Guarienti (Turin, 1953), 2:444–46.

34. In fact the source on Chrysostom remains unknown, for he did not in fact discuss this episode; see Jennifer Knust and Tommy Wasserman, "Earth Accuses Earth: Tracing What Jesus Wrote on the Ground," *Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010): 445.

Aquinas began with Alcuin but picked up on the theme of humility, the fact that Jesus was a human being on the ground, and also that the scribes and Pharisees were planning to trick him. Augustine is next deployed on this very theme, that the critics thought Jesus was too lenient so they set this trap, thinking that if Jesus released the woman, people would see that he was breaking the law of Moses. Jesus of course knew all this and responded in such a way as to reveal his own humility and sense of justice by writing on the ground. Another passage from Augustine explains this writing on the earth, and not in heaven, as distinguishing between his disciples, who should be happy they were noted down for heaven, and these scribes and Pharisees, who were headed elsewhere, to the dust. Augustine also wrote that Jesus' law was written on the earth to show that it would bear fruit, which barren stone could not. Aquinas brings in Alcuin for the comment that the ground was the human heart and the finger flexible (exactly as the Gloss) and Bede for the distinction between writing on stone and on the earth.

Jacopo was not writing biblical commentary, however; he was putting together a sermon, but we can see that the heart of the sermon was not his original work. This verse from John organized a sermon if one saw that there were three types of people in it: the Pharisees, Jesus, and a woman. The occasion of their encounter was to trap Jesus into making a mistake. Once Jacopo had this in mind, the sermon in a sense wrote itself according to Jacopo's usual method of considering topics in their parts, with further subdivisions where necessary. So, for example, he begins with the Pharisees but immediately divides them into two types: flatterers and deceivers. Jacopo reasonably cites Chrysostom as an authority for equating hypocrisy and false praise, and the apostle John as eyewitness to the welcome praise Jesus received from his followers. (In biblical terms scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites were practically synonyms.) Then Jacopo goes beyond written authorities and illustrates these themes by an appeal to Nature, bees and scorpions—was this analogy a commonplace of theology and natural history or something new? The comparison of the Pharisees to the Sirens may be his own, but he credits the Gloss on Isaiah for his information on this bit of classical mythology. But what did the Pharisees and the Sirens have in common, why would Jacopo put them together—besides that it would be better not to listen to any of them?

The Glossators probably took their information on Isaiah from the great commentary by Jerome, the basic authority on this prophet. Jerome had much to say about the strange portents and events surrounding the fall of Babylon, which would be just like the end of Sodom and Gomorrah (Is. 13:19). The Bible lists wild beasts, doleful creatures, owls, and satyrs as

presiding over this wasteland. Jerome fleshes out the devastation of Babylon by mentioning the “sirenae in delubris voluptatis,” the “sirens in the shrines of passion.” Here the Sirens are like demons. Isidore of Seville in his encyclopedia provides more information about the famous shipwrecks they provoked but also a physical description: part virgins and part birds, they were really whores (11.3.28). Since Jacopo knew Isidore well (and was no reader of Virgil or Ovid) and wants to make the point about the song of the Sirens causing a shipwreck, we can assume he has also used this source here. Since Jacopo points out that prudent sailors could stop up their ears and evade the peril, he now launches into a series of remarks about how it is best not to listen to the praises of this world. At this point we must remember, since Jacopo does not remind his audience, that it was the Pharisees who prompted this line of reasoning. Plainly Jesus did not need any advice about handling the wiles of the Pharisees, but ordinary people were prey to folly and tricks, by Pharisees or Sirens. It is no big leap to understand that the Pharisees were like the Sirens in that they used words to deceive and listening to them would result in destruction. Jerome appears as noting that humans are on a journey through the pitfalls of this life to heaven, and they must not listen to false teachings or words coming from the current equivalents to the Sirens. Jacopo has no categories of female angels or demons at his fingertips to deploy, but it is still curious that he skipped over many disagreeable male mythological figures. Perhaps in a port city the maritime image of shipwreck came to mind first. If one wanted to associate calamity with heeding the Pharisees, this metaphor was as good as any.

With his habit of tripartite subdivisions, Jacopo moves on to looking more closely at praise in the past, present, and future. Each time frame poses its own problem and hinges on a biblical verse. Remembrance of past praise should result in blushing (Rom. 6:21). Current praise should prompt thoughts of exile from our natural home (Ps. 120:5), but here Jacopo evokes Kedar as a sign of danger, the underworld, a proper fear of hell. Many authorities used the image of Kedar, darkness, the underworld—it was a favorite of Anthony of Padua, whose sermons Jacopo knew, but Anthony did not preach on this verse from John or use Kedar in Jacopo’s way.³⁵ The idea of future praise became for Jacopo a fearsome prospect of the Day of Judgment, when not many would probably hear words of praise (Ps. 11:6). He wraps up on the basic point that praise means nothing, especially to the

35. Anthony of Padua, *Sermones Dominicales et festivi*, ed. B. Costa et al. (Padua, 1979). In a Lenten sermon he cites Ps. 120:4 (1:179).

dead, wherever they are. (Jacopo's contemporary Dante thought otherwise; some in hell were happy to be remembered and praised.)

The next theme on the Pharisees takes up their false question, which Jacopo considers hypocritical or dishonest not because the woman was not caught in adultery, but because they brought her to Jesus in order to trap him. Jesus was the Truth, and Jacopo approvingly quotes Psalm 44:5 on his predictably three qualities—truth, gentleness, and righteousness. What he quotes exactly from the Psalm are the words “Propter veritatem et mansuetudinem et iustitiam etc.” Now it is typical that Jacopo cites single verses, and he was not one to consider the larger meaning in context of the passage he deployed for his own reasons. If Jacopo had more often considered the wider scriptural context, he would have been a less original thinker, since his use of snippets actually allows him a wider scope for creativity. In this case the observation about Truth interrupts what will be a long and interesting imagining of the plans of the Pharisees. How can we interpret this digression? First, this quotation from Psalm 44 appears at the beginning of Aquinas's *Catena* on this passage from John, and Aquinas credits his source, Augustine, who in fact had three more words before propter, “procede et regna,” elegantly translated, “And in thy majesty, ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness” (KJV Ps. 45:4). Many of our problems in trying to explore Jacopo's mind by reading his sermons are present. What might appear to be a digression or a fresh use of scripture is instead centuries of familiar tradition from Augustine to Jacopo, probably mediated by Aquinas.

This example rightly makes us wonder about everything in the sermon—how much is original to Jacopo? The *Catena's* long extracts contain very few independent scriptural passages, and so wherever Jacopo came up with the previous three, it was not the *Catena*, or the Ordinary Gloss. It was natural for him to pass on this nugget from the Psalms, and traditional not to be overscrupulous, as was Aquinas, about identifying his sources. His audience would no doubt expect to hear familiar things. What they may really have wondered about is where anyone learned the secret counsels of the Pharisees.

Since the Bible says nothing about the motives of the Pharisees beyond hatred and hypocrisy, Jacopo was free to invent or borrow this discourse.³⁶ It seems to be his original work, beginning with a triad—Jesus will opt for stoning the woman, or not, or he will say nothing. In each case the Pharisees have come up with a response that would discredit Jesus or in one instance

36. Jacopo had biblical models for priests and elders discussing among themselves what to say to Jesus: Matt. 21, 25, 26; Mark 11:28–29.

have Jesus stoned along with the adulteress (echoes of Stephen's martyrdom here?). Having imagined the details of this plot, Jacopo foreshadows the actual response in which Jesus came up with an answer the Pharisees had not anticipated.

The way Jesus responded leads Jacopo to considering Jesus' finger, which he says means discretion. (This is an idea that goes back at least to Gregory the Great.) This is the pointing or warning finger, but Jacopo has found this idea again in Aquinas's *Catena*, this time in an extract from Alcuin of York, a venerable ninth-century authority. By now we should not be surprised to see that Jacopo does not cite these sources. But he does quote from a Gloss on the theme of discretion and judging, which leads him to the quotation from Daniel. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni identifies this source as a work by the Carolingian abbot Rabanus Maurus, an exegete whose work was still respected.³⁷ All this analysis of discretion and justice led Jacopo to what may be his own conclusion, that not all crimes should be punished equally, in effect that the punishment should fit the crime.

This conclusion is a clue to the answers to the following question: "What, however, was Christ writing on the ground?" Jacopo was by no means the first to ask this question, but the answer mattered to him. This question presumes that Jesus was writing something legible, though scripture says nothing about this.³⁸ Jacopo will not provide an answer of his own (yet) but will instead quote major authorities. Perhaps the order in which he cites them will provide a clue to his preferences. Apart from the Gloss, he will cite no authority more recent than Chrysostom, and this is an unreliable citation. No one has as yet identified the source of Ambrose's opinion that the earth was accusing the earth, though in a letter of his he does link exegesis on this passage from John to a passage from Jeremiah on the earth, and suggests that Jesus was writing down the names of the Jews (Christian names would be recorded in heaven).³⁹ Jeremiah 23:29 contains the startling verse "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Augustine discussed in several places what Jesus might have been writing, and he may have inspired reflection on this question in subsequent generations. Where he expressed this answer, that he was writing down what he would later say about who should cast the first stone, is not known. But in a book against the adversaries of the law and

37. *SQ*, no. 243, p. 257.

38. Knust and Wasserman, "Earth Accuses Earth"; as the authors demonstrate throughout their essay, the tradition of how this story appears (or not) in the oldest manuscripts in Greek and Latin of John's Gospel is complicated, and not our subject.

39. *Ibid.*, 440, and they certainly tried to identify the source.

prophets he suggested that as the Jews were leaving one by one after Jesus' response, he showed them the number of how many of them there were, a number he had written on the ground.⁴⁰ Augustine in his vast number of works was certainly able to give a number of possible explanations for the writing. This particular answer from Augustine seems to have been at the root of what Jacopo cites as the answer in a Gloss (unknown) that Jesus was writing down their sins, which they read as they were leaving and knew to be true.⁴¹ Finally, Chrysostom is credited with the view that he wrote a sentence, "The earth will swallow up these forsaken men." This echo of prophecies by Jeremiah, commented on by Ambrose in a letter and by Jerome in his preface to that prophet, may have been the source of Chrysostom's view, probably found in one of his many sermons translated into Latin on John.⁴² In addition to sins being written on the earth, the earth also accuses or cries out, and this scriptural theme goes as far back as Abel's blood. Aquinas in his *Catena* did not take up the question of what Jesus was writing, so none of his authorities in their excerpts did either. John's text notes that the accusers left one by one, but it provides no reason to believe that they read what Jesus had written as they left. Of course nothing in the passage prohibits their reading, whatever it was.

The last major topic in the sermon is the way Jacopo weaves together his analysis of the Pharisees and women. They are characteristically alike in two ways and unlike in two ways. They were both weak natured and sinners, and the pervasive topic of sin led Jacopo to the two dissimilarities: God forgave her sins and not theirs; hers were written in heaven, theirs on the earth. Writing still preoccupies Jacopo so he digresses to the four places where the names of the saints were recorded, each with an apt verse from scripture, showing us again what a deep command of the Bible Jacopo had. Sin merits punishment and so Jacopo's attention turns again to the scene and he wonders why only the woman was being punished and not the man. Jacopo found three good reasons in Wisdom 23:33: she broke the law of Moses; she dishonored her husband; she bore another man's child. Perhaps here Jacopo was expressing his own view and turned to a book of the Bible he knew

40. Augustine, *Contra aduersarium legis et prophetarum*, lib. 1, line 1252, Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed November 21, 2012.

41. Federico Visconti in a sermon on Pentecost cited John 8:8–9 and agreed with the Gloss that Jesus was writing their sins on the ground, which they saw as they left one by one. Visconti, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, 356. The editors located the ultimate source as the Interlinear Gloss.

42. Ambrose, *Epistulae*, Book 7, letter 50, search for "terra terra, scribe hos viros abdicatos" in Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed November 21, 2012. Phrase is from Jer. 22:24–28.

well. His learning and honesty drew him to Augustine's *Enchiridion* and the explanation found there: the woman had committed four sins and the man only one, so she naturally deserved the harsher punishment. Two of her sins merit citations of Proverbs.

Finally, Jacopo's concluding topic in this sermon concerns God's compassion for the woman. What struck the priest as remarkable about this compassion was that Jesus imposed no penance on her; the woman was contrite and that sufficed. This was the plain meaning of scripture but was not church practice in the thirteenth century, when sins were confessed and had sharply defined penances fitted to the deeds and thoughts of the sinners. So Jacopo quickly points out that the situation of the woman was unique and no one else therefore had this experience—forgiveness without penance would not work for them now. He uses three standard arguments from Pope Gregory the Great to support this thesis. Sins were written down in heaven and needed to be forgiven; it was not enough for the sinner to stop sinning. (Jacopo presumes here, along with the other exegetes, that the woman will in fact sin no more.) Jeremiah 17:1 is used to illustrate the seriousness of this writing, the pen of iron with an adamantine point—not the quill likely in Jacopo's hand. Psalm 6:7 reminds the hearers of the tears and penance necessary to wash away sins. The second reason for penance was that these sins constituted blasphemies against God for which the sinners needed to make satisfaction. Lastly, sin was also a debt the sinner needed to pay, by contract. This commercial metaphor would make sense in a mercantile city like Varazze or Genoa, and it led Jacopo to finish with the Lord's Prayer and the notion that we should forgive our debtors as God has forgiven us.

This paraphrase of Gregory gives us the chance to see how Jacopo used his sources. Below we will look more closely at the broader question of how Jacopo used his authorities; here, we have a good example of how he substantially reworked and updated a book nearly seven centuries old. Jacopo's freedom with this source indicates that he had a sense of perspective on the past, perceived that certain words and images were old fashioned and needed changing, and had the confidence to make them.

In this section of the *Regula Pastoralis* (3:30) Gregory is making the point that it is indeed not enough merely to stop committing faults (*admissa*); one must not repeat them, and one washes them with tears by repenting. Jacopo will use the word *peccata* (sins) to describe these faults, making clear what Gregory had in mind. In the first example Gregory used the example of a copyist (*scriptor*) who if he stops writing and adds nothing, does not erase what he has written. Jacopo also uses the example of the writer, but he adds the words *instrumentum falsum*, a forged contract, to be more vivid about the

original writing's fault. In Genoa a forged notarial act was one of the worst crimes imaginable. The verse from Jeremiah does not appear in Gregory; it seems to be Jacopo's idea to drive home the problem of doomed writing. Gregory's second point concerns those who give insults (*contumelias*) to another, with the same basic point that it is not enough to fall silent; he has to take back these words. Jacopo has made a big change by substituting the word blasphemies (*blasphemias*), which directed the sin against God, and he buttressed this point with the verses from Romans and Job. Of course simply stopping being blasphemous did not atone for the sin; one must repent. The third example Gregory used concerned debtors who were not absolved from previous debts simply because they had stopped borrowing. Jacopo changes this a little by adding to the point that the debtor must not incur more loans as well as repay the old ones. He drove this idea home with the verse from the Lord's Prayer, transferring the debts from Gregory's general context to the particular debts or trespasses we have committed against God. Jacopo has thoroughly rewritten and expanded upon Gregory's examples and added biblical citations where there were none. He did not take credit, however, for the ideas of another, and so he mentioned his source. Jacopo wove these ideas into the particular sin of the woman in John 8:8, a verse and story Gregory did not discuss in this or any other work.⁴³

Jacopo's sermon ended with a verse from the Lord's Prayer, with no direct conclusion. Jacopo began on the theme of a story whose memorable line it would bring to mind—"let he who is without sin cast the first stone"—and ended by reminding people that if they wished to be forgiven (or not stoned) they in turn had to forgive. Perhaps another reason for no overt conclusion was that it was left to the last inspiration of the preacher. In any case Jacopo turned his attention to writing another sermon on exactly the same verse.

The second sermon is very different from the first and possibly better because Jacopo freed himself from authorities and provided more of his own ideas.⁴⁴ Humbly displaying his virtuosity as a preacher, Jacopo was not content to repeat himself but wanted to show that a biblical verse could be taken in a quite different direction. As he diverges from the received traditions about this verse from John, however, not all of his insights may be profound. Rather than provide the entire text, for this sermon we will consider only the

43. Determined by searching the phrases "mulierem in adulterio deprehensam" and "digito scribebat in terra" in the Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed November 30, 2012.

44. SQ, 261–66. Knust and Wasserman, "Earth Accuses Earth," do not discuss the second sermon; see their brief notice of the first, 444–45. Jacopo is virtually the only Latin medieval author discussed in this article.

major themes. Humility, Jesus, and Mary are the principal topics, and there is nothing at all about the Pharisees. Jacopo has clearly decided to display his skill by taking this episode of the woman caught in adultery in an entirely new direction; in fact even adultery does not come up in this sermon. Having exhausted the glosses and Aquinas's *Catena* in the first sermon, he hardly deploys them here and instead, as we will see, turns mainly to a source he knew quite well, the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux.

Jacopo begins with Jesus sitting on the ground, which he immediately equates with Mary, adding a verse (Is. 45:8) predicting that the earth would open up and bring forth a savior. Still thinking about writing, Jacopo now appears to offer his own opinion about what Jesus was writing on the ground. He was writing about how much he would adorn his mother with all gifts and virtues—something which we know has not yet happened in the frame of this gospel. The high status of Mary is the main point of this sermon, showing that even in the Lenten cycle Jacopo placed Mary in the center of his thoughts even if she did not figure prominently in the events of the season.⁴⁵ Jacopo writes that Jesus' words reveal the following three things. Jesus humbly sat on the ground, and here Jacopo makes his only reference to the Ordinary Gloss by drawing attention to an interlinear comment on how Jesus was at the seat of his Father, in obedience to him. Writing with a finger reveals how much Jesus received from his mother; this will turn out to be his human nature. For the moment Jacopo stresses that the main qualities Jesus drew from his mother were constancy and strength.

The image of Jesus sitting on the ground draws Jacopo into an extended allegorical interpretation of his experience in being born from her womb.⁴⁶ Jacopo sees this prenatal time as even humbler than sitting on the ground. He justifies this opinion in this way. Thinking in characteristic hierarchical terms he will use elsewhere, Jacopo places divine nature above everything, followed by angelic nature, human nature, the penalty or satisfaction of sin, and the guilt of sin, below which was nothing because sin holds the lowest place. (There is something Neoplatonic about this hierarchy.) Divine nature set itself down in Mary's womb and assumed human nature. Here Jacopo quotes from Philippians 2:7 on how Jesus took on the form of a slave (more

45. Marian themes dominating an Advent series of sermons would be no surprise. See also *SD*, 29r, for expected Marian themes during Advent.

46. See Jane Fair Bestor, "Ideas about Procreation and Their Influence on Ancient and Medieval Views of Kinship," in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller (New Haven, 1991), 163–65, for another close look at a different set of Jacopo's sermons as they relate to parenthood.

evidence of profound humility), becoming a little less than an angel as he brings in Psalm 8:6 and even among men abject. Jacopo makes this last point with two additional biblical passages, Psalm 22:7, but I am a worm and no man, and Isaiah 53:3, that the savior would have no form or comeliness when we see him. And even more from this same passage, Jesus even put himself under the penalty of sin, because he was wounded for human transgressions. Jacopo sums up this neat scholastic argument by observing that Jesus was not, however, under sin, because he was God, he could not sin, he was without sin.

What Jesus was writing brought Jacopo to his second major theme—the excellence and dignity he derived from his mother. The entire Trinity made this possible: the Father made Mary strong enough to help her son, the Son made her a wise advocate for people (much more on this below), and the Holy Spirit made her merciful. Hence Mary can help people in life, death, and after death. A nice example of Jacopo’s typical method follows. If anyone has a friend who can help him while alive, that’s good; the friend who helps at the deathbed is better, and the one that helps after death is best. Alive, dying, and dead: Jesus was all of these during Lent. Everywhere, Jacopo insists that death is not the end for the sinners or the saved. (This would of course be the natural theme of the Easter sermons.) Mary has become the best friend people can have because she helps in all these ways. In life she aids the just with grace and the sinners with mercy. At the hour of our death Mary defends us from the devil.

At this point in the sermon Jacopo provides, for him, a rare illustration or exemplum about how the devil infests the death scene of people, in this case the last moments of St. Martin, bishop of Tours (died around the year 398 according to Jacopo’s *Life of St. Martin* in the *Legenda Aurea*, where he draws heavily on the biography by Sulpicius Severus). Martin had many interesting interactions with demons and the devil during his lifetime, and according to the sources he saw the devil at his deathbed and spoke to him. What is important about this reference to St. Martin is that Mary’s presence is inferred in the sermon; it receives no notice in the life. The relationship between the sermons and his most famous work is a problem deferred. When certain holy men die, the angels (acting as psychopomps) take them to heaven. When those devoted to Mary die, she takes them.

According to Jacopo, Jesus made Mary a wise advocate so that she could help the faithful after death. He compares Mary to the woman of Tekoah in 2 Kings (Samuel) 14:2 who pleaded for Absalom before David, on the grounds of general human weakness, saying, “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again.” Water

is spilled on the ground and cannot return, and people are spirits going on to the next world and not returning to this one. (Wasted water was a sin in Genoa. It is certainly this image of water on the ground that came to Jacopo's mind as he pondered the image of Jesus writing on the ground.) There is also something here on the difficulty of being born again, a theme Jacopo does not pursue, possibly because it was not a Lenten subject. Instead he portrays Mary as an excellent advocate in every way. She is diligent in pursuing her causes/cases, wise in knowing the law—because if she were hateful before the king and his *familia* (the Lord and his angelic hosts?) she would not be a suitable advocate. Instead, she has the third quality of a great advocate, grace. Jacopo clearly intended by his choice of words to comment implicitly on the legal profession and the qualities of a good lawyer. This would have pleased the lawyers canon and civil in his congregation. The image of Mary pleading before the throne in heaven with its king (God) and *familia* would also evoke the judicial bench and the court servants frequently referred to as the judge's *familia*. Jacopo interestingly refers to the judge as king, certainly evoking God. In his time in Genoa and northern Italy, no king mattered and the judges were civil employees of the commune or clergy in the church courts. Truly pious preachers and people would have no trouble viewing God as their real king and themselves as his subjects.

To sum up Mary as advocate, Jacopo turns to Psalm 44:10 (KJV 45:10–13) where the queen has become Mary, always at the right hand of the Son, diligent, clothed in the gold of wisdom. Although all saints have gold, divine wisdom, only Mary wears it. Jacopo reiterates that Jesus had passed nine months in her womb. Here Mary becomes the woman mentioned in Revelation 12:1, a woman clothed in the sun who was with child, with the moon at her feet. Mary was now in heaven, a place of variety with many mansions, *domicelli*. The church celebrates this by singing, “Days of spring surround her with roses,” the fellowship of the martyrs, and lilies of the valley, evoking the fellowship of angels, confessors, and virgins. This hymn to Mary was probably a familiar theme as well.

Third, the Holy Spirit made Mary merciful. As some authority says, quoting Mary, “I always hold to mercy.” The editor was not able to identify the source for this quotation; perhaps it too is from a hymn. The book of Ecclesiasticus, like Wisdom with its feminine *Sapientia*, provides many verses on the excellence of mercy, in one place (Eccl. 24:19) compared to the fair olive tree of the fields. Any Ligurian knew about olive trees in a region reputed for oil of the highest quality. Jacopo likes the connection between mercy and olive oil. Both spread and make themselves known. Just as olive oil is the best of all fluids (*liquoribus*—so not only oils) Mary's mercy exceeds

that of all the saints. Other images from this book note that God's mercy is on all flesh, and especially valued in a time of affliction; Ecclesiasticus 35:26 goes on to compare it to a cloud of rain in a time of drought, a metaphor Jacopo does not quote, though he was not insensitive to climate, as we will see.

Jacopo has a little more to say about Mary and tribulations. The etymology of *luna*, which Jacopo fancifully derives from *lucet in nocte* (light/shines at night), becomes relevant because Mary shines forth the light of consolation. Jacopo did not get this derivation from Isidore of Seville, who has his own strange one in *Etymologies* 3.71.1, where he derives the word from *Lucina*, the bringer of light, the goddess of childbirth with the middle syllable omitted.⁴⁷ No one who pondered this antiquarian lore would want to equate a pagan goddess with Mary. Nor did Jacopo read it in the nearly contemporary great Latin dictionary, compiled in Genoa by Giovanni Balbi, who derived *luna* from *lux*, but he too notes the story about Lucina, whom some think was Diana. Mary's mercy is like the olive in the field (wild), not enclosed in a garden.⁴⁸ The latter is not open and accessible to all; the one in the wild is. Jacopo, an expert on this subject, says that certain saints are like the latter because their mercies are closed to us because we are not worthy. Mary is like the olive in the field because her mercy is for all, and here Jacopo cites Bernard of Clairvaux's Sunday sermon on Mary about her universal qualities. Bernard's famous sermons were well known to Jacopo, and he is the only cited author in this sermon.

Varagine's Sources

We cannot look as closely at all of Jacopo's sermons as we have these examples. The reader has seen enough. But we can ask some broader questions, based on all the Lenten sermons and some references to the other collections, about what we might call his habits of research. Discovering the boundaries of Jacopo's originality and use of sources is the work of decades of scholarship and new, more sophisticated databases making searching for them easier. Three preliminary points are vital. We can read almost all of the sources Jacopo had available to him, so we can watch the process of an author imposing his own thought on his materials. Decades of routines as a priest gave him a knowledge of the liturgy and the Psalter that was extraordinary. From

47. Elsewhere, *Etymologies* 8.9.56–57, Isidore explains pagan lore about Diana, who can also stand for the moon, *Luna*, and is the goddess of many things, including roads. Some pagans also think Lucina is Diana.

48. Giovanni Balbi, *Catholicon* (Mainz, 1460), at *luna*.

this we can learn a great deal about Jacopo as a reader and author, and above all something about what was going on between his ears. Jacopo knew books in Latin and not Greek. Eventually we will have other perspectives on his mental work as we investigate Jacopo as a biographer and historian. The argument is that no perspective by itself supplies an accurate picture of Jacopo da Varagine, the real subject here, not sermons or saints' lives or chronicles in general. Second, if he cites an old authority, we must always be on the lookout for an intermediate source; Jacopo may not have read the original. The most complex and commonly cited of Jacopo's sources was obviously the Bible, and this will require the most attention. Third, since the source for this exercise is the genre of Lenten sermons, and not the chronicles, for example, we should expect certain types of Christian authors and themes to predominate.

The easiest place to begin, because there are so few, is Jacopo's use of secular ancient writers.⁴⁹ Jacopo is one beneficiary of the classical inheritance, and what we emphasize here must reflect the biases of that body of literature and the modern stance toward it. So, Jacopo cites nothing at all from Virgil, Ovid, Horace, or Lucan; is this unexpected from an author who seems to have known his favorite work of poetry, the Psalms, by heart?⁵⁰ What phrases might pagan poets contribute to a sermon anyway? The harvest from ancient writers is meager and confirms a pattern. In brief, Jacopo cites Cicero twice, but the stories are chestnuts most likely gathered from other authors. The one maxim from Suetonius is not direct either. (Nothing from Sallust.) Three references from Seneca's *De Ira* at first glance suggest Jacopo read it, but in fact two are commonplaces and the remaining one is only a possible sign that he had read the original. Putting all this together, we should conclude that classical literature provided Jacopo with almost no material, anecdotes, literary allusions, or stylish phrases for his sermons.⁵¹

49. For a survey of this important question covering all of Jacopo's works, see Bertini, "Le fonte classiche in Iacopo." The very few such references in *SS* and *SD* confirm this pattern.

50. *SD*, 79r, is a rare exception, but one proving the rule, where Jacopo cites Virgil, presumably the *Georgics*, and the late Roman agricultural writer Palladius on the qualities of good soil—hardly a memorable Virgilian theme and in my view a sign that Jacopo had read little and remembered nothing of Virgil. In *SS*, 416v, Jacopo knows that Virgil wrote the *Bucolics*, *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, but nothing more. By way of comparison, Visconti's classical references are few and prove little, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, 1139–40, and the Psalms was his most frequently cited book in the Bible, signs here of a commonality of experience between these churchmen.

51. By the time Jacopo compiled the *SD*, he seems to be familiar with Cicero's works, for example *Tusculan Disputations*, 263r, and *On Friendship*, 272v, but he may have obtained this knowledge from yet another intermediate source, perhaps his favorite, Augustine, though we should be alert to signs of his continued reading. The Dominicans discouraged studying classical pagan authors (see Mulchahey, "First the Bow Is Bent in Study," 56–57) and encouraged reading Augustine (109).

One other work, however, mattered more than all of these to Jacopo: the *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* by Valerius Maximus. This was just the kind of source Jacopo enjoyed—a vast compilation of classical lore organized by topic, culled by Valerius from a wide reading, a kind of encyclopedia of antiquity. The problem is that some intermediary writers, like the Carolingian Sedulius Scottus and the more recent French compiler Vincent of Beauvais, also mined Valerius. In fact Jacopo is most unlikely to have known the first but was a close reader of Vincent's works, which consist largely of extracts so a scholar might quote the original and appear to know it. (Vincent was, for example, a close reader of Pliny the Elder and includes many long extracts from him, but Jacopo does not cite Pliny in these sermons—his animal lore comes from the excerpts from Aristotle.)⁵² The problem is that Jacopo often paraphrases the quotations from Valerius, possibly to harmonize the Latin style with his own. Eight “quotations” from Valerius do not amount to much anyway. We should not judge Jacopo's knowledge of classical works to be slight, however; better to assume safely for the moment that these works had limited usefulness to this preacher in thirteenth-century Italy.⁵³ Much of his information will come from respectable Christian sources, as when in the Sunday sermons he cites Lactantius as his authority for details on the pagan Furies.⁵⁴

It is useful to test this conclusion by looking at the one pagan Greek author Jacopo cites—Aristotle, known of course in translation, as was Josephus. In a sermon where Jacopo is preaching on a point concerning the seven instances of Christ's blood being shed, he mentions something about anger and blood.⁵⁵ In another sermon where loving the world is the theme, Jacopo (for reasons not worth pondering) cites Aristotle's *On Animals* on the abstruse point that birds close their eyes with the lower lid and animals with the upper one.⁵⁶ Birds hence stand for spiritual men who by closing the lower are aiming higher, while the animals stand for earthly man, eyes closed to heaven and open to the world. Here the Aristotle may be from

52. He does cite one story from Pliny in *SD*, 163r, concerning eagles, who keep a precious stone in the nest to help it bring forth eaglets, but this legend seems more likely to come from some other source like his fellow Dominican Albertus Magnus.

53. They did not seem to matter anymore in France; see Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicatorum*, 403, for one citation to Horace on brevity, and a few others, but otherwise nothing. For comparison, Humbert relies on the same general sources: the church fathers, the Bible. His most recent source is Bernard of Clairvaux, and he too omits his contemporary Dominicans.

54. *SD*, 130v.

55. *SQ*, no. 233, p. 204, possibly derived from Aristotle.

56. *SQ*, no. 265, p. 384.

Vincent, but the theological point is Jacopo's. He sparingly used animals to show how certain traits were natural, hence in his book normal, and all the more should humans demonstrate them. For example, elsewhere he cited Aristotle as the authority for the idea that even elephants showed mercy to one another by helping up one of their number who had fallen to the ground.⁵⁷ Finally, Jacopo cites Aristotle's *On Plants* for the advice that when an almond tree is old it should be tapped and then its seeping "humor" will make it more fertile—presumably more nuts.⁵⁸ Jacopo uses this bit of botany to suggest that when one is old in sin, three holes—contrition, confession, and satisfaction—should be made in the human heart, and then the old plant will be renewed and produce good fruit. Maggioni has found the original in Vincent (*Speculum Naturale*, 12:22), and we would not expect Jacopo to cite the intermediary. So, as it turns out, we have no real evidence that Jacopo knew any scientific work by Aristotle. This result is no surprise; Jacopo was a theologian and not a naturalist.

The Bible as a Source

Since the Bible was the most important book to Jacopo in the world, it is worth knowing what parts of it meant the most to him. Let us turn to the Bible and Jacopo's favorite biblical verses or episodes, and given his strong preference for the New Testament, it is best to begin there. To keep the sample manageable we will limit the first round to four or more citations.

Matthew 22:13	(4) the parable of the wedding feast and the last guest into darkness
Luke 2:35	(4) Simeon says a sword will pierce Mary's heart
Luke 12:49	(5) Jesus says, "I sent fire on the earth . . ."
Luke 24:39	(4) at his resurrection Jesus says "handle me"
John 8:44	(4) Jesus in the Temple, father of some Jews is the devil
John 12:32	(4) Jesus is entering Jerusalem, "If I be lifted up . . ."
John 15:13	(4) "Greater love than this . . . lay his life down . . ."
John 19:25	(4) Mary at the foot of the cross
1 Corinthians 10:12	(4) let he who thinks he stands be careful lest he fall

57. *SD*, 236r, and another example at 256v, how a lioness takes care of her cubs as behavior people should emulate.

58. *SQ*, no. 238, p. 234.

Philippians 2:7	(4) took on the form of a servant
Colossians 3:5	(5) mortify your members and all those sins
Hebrews 5:7	(6) when Jesus in the flesh offered up prayer for us
Hebrews 12:3	(4) Jesus endured much; don't be weary
2 Peter 2:22	(4) a dog returns to its own vomit

At first glance we should note that Mark, Acts, and Romans do not appear on this list and Jacopo did not find these books so useful in writing his Lenten sermons.⁵⁹ Why this was the case will be clearer when we look more closely at these verses.

Matthew 22:13 is the end of the parable about the wedding feast, and marriage was one of Jacopo's favorite images as it foreshadowed his understanding of a union or marriage with Christ. Two preliminary points suggest that Cana or marriage was not in fact what drew Jacopo to this verse. First, he does not cite at all the famous line in Matthew 22:14 about the many called but the few chosen. Second, the verse most interesting to him is about the damnation of the wrongly dressed last guest.⁶⁰ Let us look at the ways Jacopo deploys this verse. In a sermon on the rich man in hell Jacopo makes the point that the damned cannot help themselves or their final deeds, because their hands are tied.⁶¹ In another sermon about hell all are tightly bound, and here he adds the point that the damned are cast into outer darkness.⁶² Finally, those not in the light of God are in hellish darkness; while the good have the ability to receive grace whole, naturally the damned do not.⁶³ Clearly what mattered to Jacopo was the image of the damned bound in the darkness of hell. He could match the Puritans in his sense of fire and brimstone preaching. But according to his church only those in purgatory

59. A glance at Federico Visconti's top eight biblical references in his sermons is revealing: Matt. 5:8 (12); Matt. 10:19 (12); John 15:5 (25); 1 Cor. 3:12 (11); 2 Cor. 8:14 (11); 1 John 2:16 (21); 1 John 3:17 (12); Rev. 19:16 (11)—*no overlap* with Jacopo's list. They were different men, and this test suggests there is something distinctive about one's favorite Bible verses. Visconti, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, index, 1113–38. Though Federico cited Mark, he was by far the least cited evangelist (1134). A well-educated Aragonese priest, Guido of Monte Rochon, wrote a manual for curates in the early 1330s containing many biblical citations. Guido cites only *two* of Jacopo's favorite verses, and them only once. See his *Handbook for Curates: A Late Medieval Handbook on Pastoral Ministry*, trans. Anne T. Thayer (Washington, D.C., 2011), scriptural index, 347–50.

60. For other Cana sermons, see SD, 39r–59r, mostly on the qualities of a good wife, not the theme here, another sign that Jacopo tried hard to avoid repeating himself.

61. SQ, no. 226, p. 166—from the verse *ligatis manibus et pedibus*—tightly bound hand and foot.

62. SQ, no. 236, p. 358.

63. SQ, no. 261, p. 358, and no. 262, p. 361—note how closely they follow in two consecutive sermons.

still might benefit from the prayers of the living; the doomed were beyond all assistance and hope.

Luke 2:35, Simeon's prophesy about Mary, fits well with Jacopo's pervasive thoughts on the Virgin, but we must wonder what in particular about her is the point of this verse. In a sermon on Mary Jacopo claims that the sword piercing her heart is about the fact that she will be martyred in the spirit and not the flesh.⁶⁴ Two other uses of this verse bring Mary to the Passion and the bitter sorrows she experienced at the foot of the cross.⁶⁵ The last reference is about bells but also comes up in the context of the Crucifixion; Jacopo is thinking about the twelve bells that rang for Christ: the apostles, but of course one broken bell—Judas.⁶⁶ These bells also sound an appropriately triumphant resurrection theme. Jacopo brings Mary into this by noting her one bell, which sounded when John the Baptist leapt in the womb in her presence (Luke 2). Today, Jacopo means his time, this bell is pierced, broken, and has lost its sound. Once again we see that Jacopo certainly has a sense of historical distance with respect to sacred chronology, and his vision of Mary remains a woman of tribulations rather than joy.

Luke 12:49 contains Jesus' words that he has come to send or spread fire in the world, and we expect allegory here—what does this fire signify? The first occurrence in a sermon makes clear that this fire is love, the blood of the Passion, on John 15's theme about the greatest love.⁶⁷ Plainly this fire is love and not wrath. Jacopo also uses the theme of fire to illuminate the sacrament of bread, and here the issue is the three farinas—let us say types of wheat grain/flour that were baked (placed in a fire) to make the host. More love here, but also an echo of Lamentations 1:13, where the fire sent down is definitely more punishing than loving, at least at first. (This notice of Hebrew scripture alerts us that the verse from Lamentations will appear on the list of Jacopo's favorites from that source.) Jacopo does not make clear what he has in mind by the three farinas, but no doubt his audience knew very well. The last two uses are other points about the fire of love, the second one recalling the lamb as a burnt offering.⁶⁸ Blood, flesh, and lamb become tokens of this burning, fiery, divine love.

Luke 24:39, where Christ is enjoining the apostles to note the reality of his hands and feet, is perfect for a Resurrection sermon, and the verse appears

64. SQ, no. 203, p. 43. In *SD*, 28v, his interest is different, in Simeon as an old man.

65. SQ, no. 258, p. 340, and no. 284, p. 497.

66. SQ, no. 284, pp. 496–97, for the entire vignette.

67. SQ, no. 225, p. 154.

68. SQ, no. 260, p. 352, and no. 277, p. 456.

four times in two of the last Lenten sermons.⁶⁹ The apostles upon seeing Jesus in the flesh are confused and fearful, and Jesus is trying to comfort them by inviting them to handle him and see that he is not a spirit but has flesh and bones. Jacopo is making clear the physical reality of the Resurrection—which literally at first glance was a sighting or appearance, but was actually somebody who could be touched. Jacopo will also bring in John's additional points that Jesus stretched out his hands to the apostles, and of course the famous scene of doubting Thomas.⁷⁰

John 8:44 is in the middle of a long speech by Jesus, and this part concerns those Jews hostile to his message, and he considers the devil to be their true father.⁷¹ Jacopo was, as we will repeatedly see, not a priest shying away from preaching about the devil, but what will be his particular points here, since the absent Jews of Genoa cannot be the issue? In a sermon listing the characteristics of the devil Jacopo brings in this verse for the third one—that the devil is a liar.⁷² Just as there is no truth in the devil, when he lies he speaks from the heart and is the father of lies. To Jacopo this is just like the Jews who defamed Christ and hence showed their true paternity. Another sermon partly concerns the role of speech in healing and brings Jacopo to the congenial theme of languages, inevitably important to a preacher.⁷³ The third type of language is demonic, the speech of perverse men who lie. Language is again an issue in the third use of the verse, this time again about the devil with a focus on his works—he is a liar but he can kill with words (a vivid speech act).⁷⁴ The final two notices occur in consecutive sermons again in the context of the Resurrection and also concern language use. Jacopo's point is that those who use earthly words are showing that they belong to the world. Those who curse and tell lies are engaging in sinful speech and signaling that they belong to the province of hell and speak the language of the devil. Besides the themes of the devil and lies, Jacopo is easily moving to some points from John's letters (1 John 2 and 5) about the pitfalls of loving

69. SQ, no. 291, pp. 539–40, and no. 292, pp. 541, 543, for this and what follows. Again in *SD*, 144r–156v, a series of sermons on the road to Emmaus and its sequel are on a very different theme, how the Good Pastor strengthened the apostles and corrected their errors.

70. Much has been written on this theme; see Glenn W. Most, *Doubting Thomas* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007) and Alexander Murray, *Doubting Thomas in Medieval Exegesis and Art* (Rome, 2006).

71. The devil loomed large in Jacopo's thinking, as did angelology and demonology; he did not fit the new model of Satan as heretic rather than plain villain in the late thirteenth century as described by Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, trans. Teresa Fagan (Chicago, 2006).

72. SQ, no. 212, p. 89.

73. SQ, no. 231, p. 191, a *lingua diabolica*.

74. SQ, no. 290, p. 532.

the world. (More on John's letter below.) By now we are not surprised about the easy transition Jacopo can make between Jews and the devil. The entire verse concludes on the point of the devil as the father of lies, the potential in language use for damnation.

John 12:32, Jesus' prophesy about what will happen if he be lifted up from the earth, will serve Jacopo in making the Crucifixion vivid. First Jesus is like a flag or standard raised up, a familiar medieval image.⁷⁵ The verse is also the text for a sermon on the Passion.⁷⁶ Drawing on exegesis by Augustine, Jacopo goes to work on the theme of exactly how Jesus will draw everyone to himself, perhaps by a mystical chain. The word "everyone" and Augustine have in some way brought Jacopo to the topic of predestination, but he will not burden his listeners with an extended analysis on that vexed issue. Instead he poses three possibilities for "all"—it may refer to the entire package of spirit, body, and soul, or those predestined to be saved, or indeed all people everywhere. Jacopo does not express a preference or resolve the issue, so he has left on the table the concept of universal salvation (however much he doubted it). The next sermon on the same theme, the Passion, from a different perspective (again showing Jacopo's versatility as a preacher) suggests that Jesus would be drawing to himself all of creation—earth, heaven, and hell.⁷⁷ Finally, the verse can be used to prove that Jesus had made a firm peace with God even though he had been struck, punished, whipped, and crucified, because he had been raised up, literally on the cross, figuratively to heaven.⁷⁸

John 15:13 is "Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends," an inevitable theme for Lent. Jacopo places this love in a small catena of his own. He had previously mentioned the fire that cooked the bread (Luke 12:39), another farina image, and he will go next to the fire of sorrow in Canticles 1. Hence the progression—fire, love, sorrow. All the other references are clear on the greatest love and its sign—a voluntary death.⁷⁹ This Lenten emphasis is much more on love and the sacrificer, his life and death, than it is on the friends or recipients.

John 19:25 is on the women at the foot of the cross—Mary, her sister Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.⁸⁰ This poignant moment

75. SQ, no. 275, p. 441.

76. SQ, no. 275, p. 441, for this and what follows.

77. SQ, no. 276, p. 447.

78. SQ, no. 279, p. 466.

79. SQ, no. 260, p. 352; no. 277, p. 456; no. 288, p. 521.

80. For the medieval understanding of the three Marys, see Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), 3–92, especially 44.

can be used to illustrate a love stronger than death and how believers cannot fall from fellowship with Jesus because they are, like the women, joined to him at the cross.⁸¹ A sermon on Mary Magdalene, who figures so prominently in the story of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, takes a different approach. This Mary is the *peccatrix*, the sinner who visited and associated with Christ during his tribulations. Here the verb is in the plural; all three are standing at the cross. The final use of the verse makes clear what these three women had in common; they all loved Jesus.⁸² Despite all the potential confusion about the identities of the three Marys, it is refreshing to see Jacopo find a way to simplify these complex issues for his audience by stressing what they had in common—love.

In 1 Corinthians 10:12 Paul is warning his readers to be careful that in their certainty about how they stand with the Lord, they might nevertheless fall. In the context of preaching about how a doctor heals illness with medicines, Jacopo makes the point that sin needs to be healed simultaneously with the sinner.⁸³ Just as a doctor heals illness with medicines, sin and the sinner are healed in the same way, and presumably Jacopo has the clergy in mind here as the equivalent professionals—those in the sin removal business.⁸⁴ Holy people need to watch lest they fall. In reminding his audience that no person is secure in his status, Jacopo tells them it is possible to fall in life, while dying, and after death.⁸⁵ Since the devil knows so well how to deceive people, Jacopo is suggesting that even after death people might not be secure in their salvation. While discussing the idea of correcting sin, and again he may have the clergy primarily in mind, Jacopo reminds them not to be haughty, but to condescend (in a good way) to sinners.⁸⁶ He takes this theme to another level by bringing in a verse 3 Kings 20 (:11, from Ahab of all people) that in effect one should not boast of putting on one's armor as much as in taking it off. Jacopo then cites Augustine for the commonplace that no one in this life is secure.⁸⁷ Finally, in the context of peril, Jacopo uses the verse from Corinthians to observe that one could be holy today and evil tomorrow.⁸⁸ The theme throughout these references is that salvation is

81. SQ, no. 217, p. 112, and no. 244, p. 266, the firmness in particular of the *stabat mater*.

82. SQ, no. 287, p. 513.

83. SQ, no. 215, p. 102.

84. A phrase I owe to Samuel Cameron, *The Economics of Sin: Rational Choice or No Choice at All?* (Cheltenham, 2002), 48.

85. SQ, no. 220, p. 127.

86. SQ, no. 236, p. 219.

87. The editor could not identify the source of Augustine's comment, which again raises the prospect that one could be saved and then lose it.

88. SQ, no. 264, p. 376.

unstable and apparently can be lost. Hence people must be vigilant and cling to the church. It may be that Jacopo is also alluding to purgatory, though he rarely mentions this place. In hell the damned are beyond hope, and in heaven the saved are beyond temptation. Hence perhaps only in purgatory may the devil still be ensnaring some souls and demoting them to hell. Could this be a flaw or an unexpected peril in the workings of purgatory?

In Philippians 2:7 Paul makes the well-known comment that Christ made himself a man of no reputation and took on the human form of a slave. In preaching about pride Jacopo gives two notable pagan examples, Tamar from Valerius Maximus and Nero from the famous Dominican preacher and bishop of Acre earlier in the century, Jacques de Vitry.⁸⁹ To balance these bad people with good ones, Jacopo uses this verse to evoke the humility of Jesus and will proceed to mention Mary. In a sermon on Christ's divine nature, Jacopo says that Christ was in the form of God, and thought it was not wrong to be equal to God, but he also made himself empty, nothing, taking on the form of a slave.⁹⁰ In a sermon on the benefits of the Passion we have already seen that Jacopo notes the verse on how Jesus will draw all up to himself (John 12:32). Jacopo now takes this idea in another direction by including animals in the "all," citing Wisdom 13:19 for the comment that every creature loves its own type.⁹¹ The inclusive nature of Christ's message includes people as well, since Christ took on a form similar to humans, so he must have loved them as well. Finally, Jacopo turns to the scene of how people should prostrate themselves before the cross, as Christ did on it.⁹² Jacopo notes how "we" genuflect before the cross, and pray before it, the office in Greek and Latin. The people at the foot of the cross also prayed, but not in Hebrew, they were silent there, because they had not acknowledged him. Here Jacopo's dislike of Jews seems to be trumping scripture where Jesus' own cries from the cross were remembered in Aramaic. But his ear for language notes that the three women at the foot of the cross apparently said nothing. Jacopo has used this verse in a very eclectic way, applying it to humility, the Passion, and even opening the door to the salvation of animals. But in a Genoese context with many slaves, he did not take up that topic here.

89. SQ, no. 223, p. 147. Hugh of Saint-Cher uses this verse in a completely different way, citing 1 Kings, Psalm 86, and Hosea 2 and 11, but with no notice of actual slavery: *Postilla*, 7:182r, col. a.

90. SQ, no. 244, p. 261, using the word *rapina* to describe what claiming to be equal to God was not, a Christological theme.

91. SQ, no. 275, p. 444.

92. SQ, no. 284, p. 499.

In Colossians 3:5 Paul is encouraging the faithful to put some specific sins to death: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, and covetousness—which is idolatry, the theme of the verse. This palette of sins offers Jacopo the chance to pick what particular sin he wishes to emphasize, or name them all, as he does in the context of a sermon on what sinners should be doing.⁹³ He is also intrigued with the idea of mortifying sin, putting it to death.⁹⁴ In explaining the uncleanness of all sinners, Jacopo ties this verse to an even more frightful context, Revelation 18 (:2) where Babylon, the dwelling place of demons, evokes the special dirtiness of usury.⁹⁵ This sin, borrowing or lending money at interest or with the hope of gain, was necessarily a fixture of the Genoese commercial economy and one Jacopo regularly deplored in detail. He made clear that the usurer would not be in heaven because he offends God, Mary, and the saints, nor in the world when dead, but he will be in hell with the demons.⁹⁶ Here usury is a sin of avarice, which is slavery to idols (i.e., money) as in the verse. Jacopo brings Paul's main point about idolatry directly to his audience and drives it home with the awful image of being a slave to idolatry. The idea that a Genoese could be in the same relation to idolatry as one of his slaves was to him would be quite vivid. Again, when discussing sinners in hell, Jacopo compares them to slaves, this time using the verse to explain that avarice is the likeness of slavery.⁹⁷ Being a slave was a common enough image in the New Testament, but it was no less relevant to late thirteenth-century Genoa.

Jacopo deploys Hebrews 5:7 to emphasize the flesh and blood of Jesus as a real self-sacrifice by the new high priest. In Hebrews 12:3 the unknown author takes up the matter of what Jesus endured, an apt theme for Lent. All references to this verse, concerning Christ's wounds, Passion, and Resurrection, make the point that as he endured the inflictions of sinners, so the believers should not be faint or deficient in their own minds, presumably in the face of trials or persecution.⁹⁸ Jacopo understands the subtle message of Hebrews about sacrifice as prayer.

93. SQ, no. 196, p. 6. Here Hugh of Saint-Cher cites Chrysostom on this verse. He may be the source for some of Jacopo's citations. Hugh of Saint-Cher, *Postilla*, 7:193r, col. b.

94. SQ, no. 214, p. 99.

95. SQ, no. 231, p. 190.

96. SQ, no. 240, p. 243.

97. SQ, no. 278, p. 462: "simulacrum servitus."

98. SQ, no. 202, p. 42; no. 280, p. 471; no. 289, p. 526; no. 292, p. 541.

In 2 Peter 2:22 the apostle uses the metaphors of the dog and his vomit, the sow and her muck, to illustrate worldliness and sin. In a sermon on the healing of the man blind from birth, Jacopo tells a story. Someone asked a philosopher: what have I been, what am I, and what shall I be?⁹⁹ He answered, you were fetid sperm, you are a sack of shit, and you will be food for worms. How could Jacopo make the filthiness of sin more disgusting, and he bangs home the point with this verse. In another sermon Jacopo makes a straightforward connection between hell, swine, and worldliness, a kind of infernal pigsty.¹⁰⁰ Life was not always this clear. All the dirt also brought to Jacopo's mind the antidote—baptism washed people clean, but alas they still sinned. What has happened is that like an old proverb, old habits die hard, and it is of course human nature that parallels the dog and his vomit.¹⁰¹ Jacopo accepts that man's nature is still vile, even after baptism, with the pervasive fear that in effect becoming dirty again is common, and it is not possible to be washed again so easily in the font.

A preliminary view on Jacopo's favorite New Testament verses suggests these themes in the context of Lent: the Jews and the devil, predestination and salvation, love, languages, and Mary.

Let us now turn to Jacopo's most cited verses from Hebrew scripture, again limiting the sample to the verses cited four or more times.

Genesis 1:2	(4) the earth was without form
Job 1:21	(8) naked came I out of my mother's womb
Job 16:16	(4) I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin and dirtied my flesh with ashes
Psalms 21:16	(5) wicked dogs around me
Psalms 102:4	(4) my heart is smitten, I forget to eat
Proverbs 30:15–16	(4) four things not enough: grave, barren womb, earth without water, fire
Canticles 5:1	(5) I am come into my garden, spices, honeycomb
Sirach 10:9	(5) how can he who is dust and ashes be proud?
Sirach 10:13	(4) for when a man is dead he will inherit creeping things and wild beasts
Isaiah 33:7	(5) valiant cry out, ambassadors weep

99. SQ, no. 251, p. 302—the editor identifies old works now known as Pseudo-Augustine and Pseudo-Bernard as possible sources.

100. SQ, no. 278, p. 462.

101. SQ, no. 282, p. 483, my sense of the proverb *facta sunt posteriora deteriora prioribus*. The fourth notice is an error for 1 Peter 2 in the index.

Isaiah 63:2	(4) Edom, why clothing red?
Jeremiah 6:26	(4) daughter, sackcloth and ashes
Lamentations 1:12	(4) Zion mourns and is desolate
Joel 1:17	(5) the seed is rotten, the crop withered

A striking feature of this list is the virtual absence of the Pentateuch—hence the insignificance of Moses—and the thin place of the prophets. In a Lenten context the absence of the Passover seems especially revealing. The themes of mourning, ashes, and fasting seem to predominate, certainly over any theme of joy, even at Easter. Given the emerging sense of Jacopo's attitude toward Jews, we might expect his use of the Old Testament to be gingerly and have little to say about them.

Genesis 1:2 explains that the act of creating heaven and earth left this place formless and empty. Jacopo uses this verse to show that this earth as it is could bear no fruit.¹⁰² In a more expanded sense the verse also includes the idea of the spirit of God poured out over the waters, and Jacopo equates this with the tears of the Holy Spirit, and in an even more vivid way the sweat and tears of Jesus.¹⁰³ Jacopo also used this verse to emphasize the void and darkness of the abyss, and this awful state reminded him of those not leading a good life and illuminated by scripture.¹⁰⁴ Instead, they were worldly in the sense of implying nothingness; they were not good and were bereft. Creation per se does not engage Jacopo so much as the preacher's theme of emptiness.

Jacopo was a close student of Job and knew Gregory the Great's massive exegesis of that book. Leaving and entering the world naked meant to Jacopo that materialism was a waste of time, but in his moral framework what came to mind was again the sin of avarice.¹⁰⁵ In another sermon Jacopo was preaching about how Job fought the temptations of the devil. Having endured so much loss Job reached this conclusion, and he (and Jacopo) moved on from this verse to the point that the Lord gives and also takes away.¹⁰⁶ If we take the good, we must also endure the bad. In the same sermon Jacopo recurs to this verse when discussing the temptations of Christ. He mentions this again in the context of worldly goods, this time directly following the parallel 1 Timothy 6 (:7): "For we brought nothing

102. SQ, no. 250, p. 295.

103. SQ, no. 250, p. 295.

104. SQ, no. 271, p. 417. Another reference in the index to Genesis 1:2 is defective.

105. SQ, no. 196, p. 8, and as we will see, this verse in Job is frequently linked to 16:16.

106. SQ, no. 204, p. 50.

into this world and it is certain we carry nothing out.”¹⁰⁷ Again Jacopo emphasizes to his audience that riches remain in this world, so if one only receives them here, and because they are worldly, they are a problem.¹⁰⁸ Jacopo has not forgotten about the poor (a common sight in thirteenth-century northern Italy), and when talking about Christ and them he explains that birth and death are the two extremes, and in between is life.¹⁰⁹ Life should be lived between these two extremes, which are also associated with poverty as in Job 1:21. But Jacopo concludes by observing that the mean in this life should still be poverty, and he supports this with the verse from the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3), “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” This linkage does Jacopo credit, but he has apparently missed the point about who exactly are the poor in spirit.

In the context of the absence of light and riches, Jacopo claims that those lacking the light of divine grace and wisdom think that riches, luxuries, and honors are good.¹¹⁰ These worldly riches are, however, not true riches because of the view in this verse from Job. Again this verse takes him to Job 16 and the theme of mourning and sackcloth, which leads him to death itself and Job 21:26, in death we feed worms.¹¹¹ Jacopo places before his audience, fellow preachers or his flock, presumably the more wealthy Genoese attending services in the cathedral or the Dominican convent, that in death we all return to the earth where the worms shall corrupt and eat us. In another sermon on death and riches he reverses the order of the two verses from Job but makes the same point: in death the rich have only sackcloth and ashes, and they decay in disgusting ways the same as everyone else.¹¹² Finally, as he approaches Good Friday, Jacopo reminds his people that Jesus was also buried and cites Romans (6:4) to point out that the faithful were buried with him (he takes this burial literally).¹¹³ The religious, the clergy and monks and nuns, already have nothing personally; they hold their goods in common. It is the lay person who is able to say Job 1:21, while the religious came into this world with nothing, lived here with nothing, and left it in the same state. What is most relevant to Jacopo about the trials of

107. SQ, no. 204, pp. 50–51. Neither verse is cited in the *Legenda Aurea*, so a sermon message.

108. SQ, no. 226, p. 159.

109. SQ, no. 252, p. 303; this idea may be a commonplace or somehow derive from Aristotle.

110. SQ, no. 257, p. 334.

111. Three times Job 16:16 appears near Job 1:21: SQ, no. 198, p. 8; no. 257, p. 334; no. 274, p. 436, in the context of death, blackness, suffering, and the idea that sackcloth is made of goat hair, hence a kind of cilice, p. 334.

112. SQ, no. 274, p. 436.

113. SQ, no. 285, p. 505.

Job is the issue of wealth, and the ashes of death. This kind of chunking of references is clear in a sermon where Jacopo makes the link among Revelation 6:12, the sun black like sackcloth, Jeremiah 12:7, placing one's soul in the hands of enemies, and Job 16:16, when being sewn into the sack and handed over to one's enemies to be beaten is the image Jacopo leaves his people.¹¹⁴

Psalm 21:16 makes the parallel of having one's strength dried up like a broken pot to the dryness of those sinning through malice. Aridity is the basic point.¹¹⁵ Dryness was a familiar feature of the Ligurian climate, so when Jacopo remarks that a plant in a dry place bears no fruit and applies it to sinners, people knew what he meant.¹¹⁶ In Lent it will be a small step to Christ's death, when his spirit in some sinless way dried up, but more vividly his body on the cross as all his blood poured forth.¹¹⁷ While discussing the stages of life Jacopo equates them with the canonical hours, with vespers as old age and the old man as dried up.¹¹⁸ Hebrew scriptures had ample remarks on dry climates; this is the one appealing to Jacopo.

Psalm 102:4 also concerns fire, in this instance "my bones are burned as a hearth," or a burnt offering. The fire of the Passion is the obvious tie to Lent.¹¹⁹ The burnt offering may also be the sacrificial lamb, or even the blood at the cross that left the bones desiccated.¹²⁰ Jacopo thinks about dried bones in the context of Christ's Passion, blood, and the lamb. Since Jacopo may never have witnessed a human or animal cremation, the burnt bones have no special meaning to him. Although Jacopo seems to have memorized large parts of if not the entire Psalter, the psalms do not appear as favorite verses as much as one might have anticipated.¹²¹ Perhaps Lent drew him to other books and themes on Christ.

Proverbs 30:15–16 lists the things never satisfied: the grave, a barren womb, earth lacking water, and fire. This verse appeals to Jacopo as a way to explain why no one is satisfied with luxuries, riches, and honors, here linked with hell, dry land, and fire.¹²² (The missing element is the barren woman.) In the

114. SQ, no. 270, p. 412.

115. As in SQ, no. 214, p. 97, the first notice.

116. SQ, no. 238, p. 234.

117. SQ, no. 275, p. 445, and no. 283, p. 492.

118. SQ, no. 288, p. 519, a clever way to merge evening and death.

119. SQ, no. 225, p. 154, and no. 246, p. 276. This is KJV Ps. 102:3.

120. SQ, no. 277, p. 456, and no. 283, p. 492.

121. Dominican novices memorized the Psalter; see Mulchahey, "First the Bow Is Bent in Study," 101.

122. SQ, no. 229, p. 179.

context of describing a type of leprosy, which to Jacopo is like avarice because it can never be satisfied, he brings in hell, the barren womb, and the earth.¹²³ This is a nice illustration of how Jacopo thinks. He never tires of discussing avarice and making it appear as appalling as possible. The general medieval horror of leprosy would serve this aim well, and also the inexorable march of the disease to death makes it seem like something that can never be satisfied. Avarice too seems to have no natural limit, except in the death of those who practice it, who are headed for hell too. The wider context of the four things in Proverbs is this sense of enough, sufficiency. But the point began with the horseleech having two daughters crying “give, give.” The bloated bloodsucker appears in a sermon where Jacopo is distinguishing various types of fevers.¹²⁴ Jacopo equates the first fever, which needs to be fed daily, and hence is a recurrent one, with venial sins. There are worse fevers and sins, but these two are remorseless in the sense of being steady; they say “give” and never “enough.” Finally, Jacopo returns to the theme of loving worldly things (luxury, the first of the four things), the horseleech, and a story about Alexander the Great, all leading to the conclusion that pride is the cause of all sins.¹²⁵

Canticles 5:1, “I am come into my garden, drink friends, drink abundantly, beloved,” lends itself to literal and spiritual meanings. Jacopo posits three cups, one pure, one mixed, one foul, and it is naturally the heavenly cup that we are invited to drink.¹²⁶ He also paraphrases this verse as implying eating and drinking, which we will be invited to do at the Virgin’s table in the Father’s house where everyone will be filled.¹²⁷ The first part of this verse mentions drinking wine and milk together, an odd mixture.¹²⁸ Jacopo finds here a good allegorical interpretation—celestial glory, and the blessedness of the saints. Or the simple theme of imbibing together can invoke the servants of God as convivial friends drinking the water (alas) of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹ Lastly, Jacopo extends the verse to include eating honeycomb with honey, along with the other pleasant activities.¹³⁰ He ties this to his theme by equating the honeycomb with Christ: the wax of humanity, the honey of divinity.

123. SQ, no. 234, p. 207.

124. SQ, no. 240, p. 240.

125. SQ, no. 241, p. 247. The editor says this story is a commonplace, the philosophers discussing the death of Alexander and his tomb.

126. SQ, no. 225, p. 155.

127. SQ, no. 246, p. 278.

128. SQ, no. 261, p. 360.

129. SQ, no. 262, p. 365.

130. SQ, no. 272, p. 425.

Jacopo's medieval Bible included a book he called Ecclesiasticus, now usually titled Sirach and left out of later reformed Bibles. Sirach 10:9, "How can he who is dust and ashes be proud," found many uses in these Lenten sermons. Ashes connected to Job 30 and also the idea that angels were superior to people.¹³¹ Goliath, a standard symbol of pride, also evoked for Jacopo the next verse, "every potentate has a brief life."¹³² Ashes were also a symbol of humility and preserved fire just as humility preserves spiritual grace, or in another sermon, the memory of death conserves spiritual grace.¹³³ Dust (*terra*) is what God used to make Adam, and yet in death we are "condemned into ashes" and therefore should be humble and not boastful.¹³⁴ Sirach 10:13 continues on the theme of death with this gloomy prospect: "For when a man dies he will inherit serpents (creeping things), wild beasts, and worms."¹³⁵ The corpse in a pit provides bounty for these creepy creatures.¹³⁶ When a man is below the earth, no matter how much he vaunted himself over others in this life, in death he is food for worms.¹³⁷ The Lenten season was a time of *memento mori*, and Jacopo's northern Italian urban people certainly knew that the grave was not "a fine and private place" but was for most people more like a compost pit in a churchyard.

In Isaiah 33:7 the prophet predicts that "the angels of peace shall weep bitterly." The theme of Jacopo's use of this verse is of course the angels. Sinning in the presence of these angels, the saints, and God is a good reason for confession.¹³⁸ The angels rejoice when sinners convert to a good life and they mourn their lies. Here the verse includes "Behold their valiant ones shall cry without"; these brave ones are also angels.¹³⁹ They are also compassionate, and they mourn as well as weep.¹⁴⁰ Angels in this verse are ambassadors, messengers, and heralds; they perform many functions and are frequently present in Jacopo's sermons and theology.

131. SQ, no. 197, pp. 10–11.

132. SQ, no. 204, p. 50: "Omnis potentates brevis vita." Goliath is powerful but no ruler or king.

133. SQ, no. 223, p. 144, and no. 238, p. 233; the latter also brings in Genesis 18 and Abraham's claim to be cinders and ashes.

134. SQ, no. 252, p. 304; Jacopo derives this from Sirach 10:9 and uses the phrase "in cinerem redigendus," a brief quotation from 2 Pet. 2:6 not detected by the editor.

135. As in SQ, no. 197, p. 14, simply the human condition after death, or when he discusses the pauper in the bosom of Abraham, this is what follows death—corruption. SQ, no. 226, p. 161.

136. SQ, no. 257, p. 335.

137. SQ, no. 257, p. 335.

138. SQ, no. 229, p. 180.

139. SQ, no. 253, p. 312.

140. SQ, no. 270, p. 415, and no. 284, pp. 496 and 498, the last an unusual case of the same verse cited twice in one sermon, but here in the context of many examples of weeping in the Bible.

In Isaiah 63:2 the prophet is speaking of he who comes from Edom, and this will be someone red, something angry, in the way Jacopo thinks. So the cross is red from the splattering of blood, as the admiring angels said that Christ's garments were like the color of treading in the mash of the wine vat—in other words, dark red.¹⁴¹ The context here is the interesting way Jacopo uses color symbolism to portray the life of Christ—white at birth, red at the Crucifixion, and black after death as in Revelation 6:12 the sun was made black. Jacopo revisits these themes: Christ's redness, dripping with blood on the cross, and in death both livid and black.¹⁴² This time the color white stands for innocence, red the cross, and black death, and he credits Ambrose with this observation. So like many other instances in these sermons, we may be dealing with very old phrases and associations. Lastly, in the context of what a pilgrim carries, here the *sclavina*, a common cloak, white when pure as Christ, red on the cross, and then black.¹⁴³

A perfect theme for the beginning of Lent was the verse from Jeremiah (6:26) that was the theme of Jacopo's first sermon: "Daughter of my people wear sackcloth and cover yourself with ashes, make your mourning as for an only son, bitter mourning." Every use of this verse focuses on mourning, including the odd notice of the mourning of owls in Micah 1:8.¹⁴⁴ No other verse of the vast number from Jeremiah receives any sustained attention from Jacopo.

Sorrow takes Jacopo to Lamentations 1:12, "All you who pass by, pay attention and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow," an apt image of Christ burned in sorrow.¹⁴⁵ This idea becomes part of a long story about sacramental bread, obviously baked in a fire, but for Jacopo in the uterus of the Virgin, from a kind of eternal farina.¹⁴⁶ This way of looking at creation invokes standard medical lore about the function of the womb's heat in generating an infant—a theme that goes back to Aristotle if not before.¹⁴⁷

141. SQ, no. 227, p. 171.

142. SQ, no. 275, p. 446; no. 279, p. 466, for the reference to Ambrose that follows.

143. SQ, no. 289, p. 525; this cloak can also stand for the pilgrim's flesh at stages of life.

144. SQ, no. 196, p. 3; no. 208, p. 69; no. 253, p. 312, the owl and the jackal wailing here; and no. 254, p. 316, the poignant mourning for an only son. Jacopo misses Jonah 3:6 on ashes and sackcloth.

145. SQ, no. 225, p. 154.

146. SQ, no. 246, p. 276, very characteristic of Jacopo's methods. Note also Luke 12:49, where Jesus says he has come to send fire on the earth.

147. See Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), 121, 171–73. This a good place to observe that despite Jacopo's interest in medicine, he never cites the great medicinal dictionary by his contemporary Simon of Genoa, *Synonyma* (Parma, 1474), a work with very different purposes and sources. For example, Jacopo discusses cinnamon in a sermon SD, 47r, but there nothing like Simon's long and learned entry on it. Since Simon served at the papal court of Nicholas IV, they may never have crossed paths.

Jacopo complicates this by distinguishing the old farina, Adam's flesh, from the new one, the new spirit created from scratch. This fresh bread, the host, was baked in three fires, love, sorrow, and then the Passion as in this verse. Twice Jacopo uses the verse to illustrate Jesus as a priest offered for sacrifice and as the man of sorrows.¹⁴⁸

Finally, Jacopo five times deploys a gruesome verse, Joel 1:17, "the cattle have rotted in their own dung." In a sermon on the centurion with the sick slave, Jacopo says the invalid suffers in three ways—he is laying in bed, paralytic, and is twisted—all signs of a sinner.¹⁴⁹ The verse suggests that this sinner is also laying in the filth of his own sins and he stinks—a familiar sense of the sickbed. Leprosy, too, is a smelly disease, for Jacopo the sin of luxury that stinks to God and man.¹⁵⁰ Gregory the Great in his *Moralia* had already made the connection between the cattle putrefying in their own shit and carnal man ending his life in fetid luxury. This sin was difficult to cure, and it both corrupts and stinks—a bad effect on others.¹⁵¹ Always, there is the image of Lazarus, his body putrid in death. Many medieval paintings of the raising of Lazarus show the witnesses holding their noses. Jacopo has linked sin to dung, stench, leprosy, corruption, and death, along with ashes in the Lenten sermons.

A Closer Look at the First Epistle of John

Many possible tests might be applied to Jacopo's use of scripture as evidence for how his mind worked. Anyone's list of favorite or important verses might be searched in these sermons for the patterns of his thought. Before we sketch out what has been learned up to this point, let us look closely at how Jacopo uses one part of the Bible, the first letter of John. This exercise is valuable for two reasons. First, it provides a way to examine the singletons, the passages Jacopo cites only once. Most scriptural citations fall into this category, so we must explore Jacopo's thought from this perspective. Second, this epistle is a complex and deep understanding of Christianity. This is certainly true of Romans as well, but we have already seen that Jacopo does not draw much on that letter, which may not at first glance rise to the top of Lenten subjects. John's letter is considerably briefer, and so inclusive with respect to subject that it would lend itself to almost any topic.

148. SQ, no. 260, p. 352, and no. 270, p. 415.

149. SQ, no. 198, p. 16. In *SD*, 49v, the paralysis of the centurion's slave is also a sign of sin, so Jacopo tends to see this in all illnesses, not just leprosy.

150. SQ, no. 234, p. 206.

151. SQ, no. 240, p. 243, and no. 285, p. 502.

On the subject of Christ interceding with the Father, Jacopo cites 1 John 2:1–2 exactly on this matter: in John’s words we have in Jesus a just advocate before the Father, and a propitiation for our sins.¹⁵² When preaching on the resurrection, sin, and worldliness, Jacopo uses 1 John 2:15, “Do not love the world, or the things in the world.”¹⁵³ He has two reasons to support this. First is that whoever loves the world does not have the love of the Father in him—either not loving him, or lacking the requisite Holy Spirit within to choose the right master to serve. Second, the world and its lusts pass away, and hence are inappropriate and wasteful objects of human love. Jacopo shows that he has a deep understanding of this epistle and knows how to use it effectively. The same sentiment appears in another sermon; Jacopo has little time for loving this world.¹⁵⁴ A major promise in the letter is that the blessed will see God as he is, and Jacopo cites 1 John 3 (:2) to this effect.¹⁵⁵

In an early Lenten sermon where Jacopo was urging that enemies not be excluded from one’s good deeds, he uses all of 1 John 3:17, “Whoever will have the goods of this world and will see that his brother is in need, and will close up his bowels from him, in what way does the love of God remain in him?”¹⁵⁶ The use of viscera, bowels, one’s innards to describe what the righteous should open to the poor is probably just another way of speaking about the heart. Jacopo has moved the subject just a bit from good deeds to enemies to a more encompassing admonition to charity toward the poor. Jacopo had at his fingertips many passages about loving one’s enemies; for example, he uses Matthew 5:44, from the Sermon on the Mount, to show that Jesus was never severe and never returned an insult.¹⁵⁷ Probably, like many other people, the Genoese found it very hard to love their enemies, let alone include them in their charitable acts.¹⁵⁸ Mention enemies to them, and they thought about peoples like the Pisans or Venetians, whom they loathed. Even Jacopo cannot quite bring himself to remind the Genoese that Jesus was indeed talking about loving one’s enemies, not his own severity. So, Jacopo has substituted more agreeable recipients of one’s good deeds—the poor. It would be in my opinion wrong to suppose that Jacopo has made this

152. SQ, no. 289, p. 529.

153. SQ, no. 290, p. 532. The second passage escaped the index.

154. SQ, no. 262, p. 365.

155. SQ, no. 271, p. 420: “Videbimus eum secuti est.

156. SQ, no. 200, pp. 28–29, one of his longest citations from scripture.

157. SQ, no. 247, p. 280. This sermon in Matthew is another good exercise for exploring how Jacopo uses scripture.

158. And yet they occasionally did so, ASG, CN, Cart N. 9 parte II, 27v–28r, a legacy in 1287 of 40s. for Genoese prisoners in Pisa and 20s. for Pisan prisoners in Genoa.

alteration because he, like his fellow preachers or flock, found it easy to think of the poor as indeed the enemies of those better off than themselves. Jacopo frequently preached about the deserving poor and encouraged people to be generous to them. After all, the spiritual rewards of giving to the poor would be greater than pious acts that benefited only the wealthy—like emancipating a slave. Nonetheless, these comments suggest that Jacopo was a preacher with what we would today recognize as a social agenda or ministry.

The next verse from John appears in a sermon toward the end of Lent. In 1 John 3:18 John (and Jacopo) remind the faithful to serve the faith through works or the truth, and not by words alone.¹⁵⁹ While preaching on the world and worldly necessity, Jacopo states that the people in the world speak and the world hears them. This is the same point John makes in 1 John 4:5, but Jacopo is making a distinction about language, that there are earthly and heavenly tongues.¹⁶⁰ Those speaking the language of the world love it and the world prospers them. Whatever the heavenly language might be (prayer, what angels speak?), it is clearly the way to spiritual health. To cleanse people's souls, according to Jacopo, Christ applied a spiritual elixir: he used his blood for water. He invokes 1 John 5:6 to show that Jesus came by water and blood, hence providing two kinds of baptism.¹⁶¹ In the next verse John makes clear his characteristic insistence on the three persons, the Trinity. Jacopo uses this and the next verse to link the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit with earth, spirit, and water, and the blood.¹⁶² (Along with fire these would comprise the old list of the four basis elements: earth, air, fire, and water.)

Jacopo in one sermon put forward the teaching that the excommunicated should not be present at public preaching, possibly his own words at the moment.¹⁶³ He supports his case with 1 John 5:16, "There is a deadly sin; I do not say he should pray for that." John meant that some sins were so bad that they were beyond the power of prayer to remedy. Jacopo has taken this idea into the state of excommunication, a matter so grave, even in late thirteenth-century Genoa, that it should exclude a person from benefiting from any prayers, or even sermons. It might seem a stretch to use John this way, but the connection shows that Jacopo really knows this letter. Finally, when preaching on the miseries of the human condition, Jacopo mentions 1 John 5:19, the whole world lies in wickedness.¹⁶⁴ In another interesting

159. SQ, no. 276, p. 450, and the same point in no. 288, p. 521: "opera et veritate."

160. SQ, no. 231, p. 291, and especially no. 291, p. 538, which uses the word *linguagium*.

161. SQ, no. 282, p. 484.

162. SQ, no. 265, p. 381.

163. SQ, no. 235, p. 213.

164. SQ, no. 197, p. 10, and for what follows no. 232, p. 195.

sermon in which Jacopo is explaining the main demons—Lucifer, Asmodeus, Mammon, and Beelzebub—he uses this verse to show how the world indeed is in wickedness, concupiscence. Beelzebub is a type of demon who misleads, in this case by inducing girls to commit fornication. Apparently not the boys. The next demon discussed is Mammon, in charge of material things, who can best be fought by giving them away. All in all, Jacopo has displayed a sophisticated understanding of this letter and deployed it as literal or allegorical support for the points he wanted to make.

Let us conclude this examination of Jacopo's Lenten sermons by applying some tools from linguistics—pragmatics and historical philology—in order to summarize what we have learned about how Jacopo's mind worked. Pragmatics has supplied the tool of empirical ideology research, a way to investigate how words are used to generate meanings.¹⁶⁵ Explicit meanings are what Jacopo intended to directly convey to his audience or to encourage his readers to include in their sermons, and these matters are fairly obvious in the themes and arguments of the sermons. More complex are the implicit meanings, revealed in the ways Jacopo used words to flesh out his theology—what really animated and sustained him, his ideology. Our focus is on what these sermons tell us about what implicit assumptions and beliefs shaped this theology, what Jacopo did not mean to explicitly reveal, but what comes through his use of language. These findings may strike some readers as too conjectural, but they take us beyond mere exegesis of the sermons to a deeper understanding of the preacher's mind.

Few Jews lived permanently in Liguria or indeed in the parts of northwestern Italy most familiar to Jacopo. Partly because Jews appear so frequently in scripture, rather than in his milieu, Jacopo often brought them up in these Lenten sermons. It is also clear that he despised Jews, especially because he viewed them as nonbelievers, equated them with Pharisees, and did not see any other Jews to talk about. (By contrast, Federico Visconti did not mention Jews, Hebrews, or even Pharisees at all, evidence that we are looking at something particular to Jacopo.) These Pharisaical Jews were in Jacopo's eyes weak and effeminate, liars, flatterers, and above all hypocrites. Ranting about these Jews where there were none must have been an interesting experience for the preacher and his congregation. The absence of Muslims is also revealing. The Jews have become for Jacopo the people whom it was perfectly permissible to

165. See Jef Verschueren, *Ideology in Language Use: Pragmatic Guidelines for Empirical Research* (Cambridge, 2012).

deplore on a spiritual basis, and we are left to wonder at this point whether or not Jacopo thought that their conversion would change them.

A Dominican priest preaching about adultery must reflect some combination of his own views and what his married audience (and relatives?) believed about this sin. Since the society Jacopo lived in tolerated and even profited from adultery (in the form of prostitution), perhaps it is not surprising that he focused attention on the woman as at fault, though of course she was forgiven. If we can judge from Jacopo's emphasis, what concerned the male laity was the behavior of their wives and the certainty of parenthood. The grim warnings of Sirach placed in men's minds the fact that their status as father of their children rested on hope and trust, not certainty. As preachers never tired of reminding their flock, only mothers could be sure the child was theirs. In these circumstances, male fears of being a cuckold were compounded by worries that their heirs, the inheritors of their earthly goods, may be no blood relation to them at all. Jacopo stoked these fears, not for some cynical desire to obtain more charitable bequests to the church from disillusioned males, but perhaps to convince the husbands to be more vigilant and forgiving.

The attention given to what Jesus was writing on the ground reminds us that these people had a vast storehouse of divine words in scripture. Why ponder this enigma in the context of so many explicit words from God? The implicit message may be that the congregations hardly knew these biblical words, except as the preachers repeated them. Bibles were in Latin and were rare and expensive books in thirteenth-century Liguria. People's command of short, pithy scriptural passages depended on preachers constantly repeating them, doubtless in the local dialect. Jacopo wove verses throughout his sermons, sometimes providing a reference by book, sometimes not. What did it mean to people to hear a passage quoted from John's first letter when they would never read it? Jacopo rarely provides a broad context for his scriptural quotations, and whatever the purpose of his sermons, they were not teaching or propounding the Bible *per se*. Yet since all scripture was profitable and the word of God, why care about a few more words (and maybe not even them) written in the dust? Perhaps the analogy to the Ten Commandments is a clue, those words written on stone by God. By citing the authorities, Jacopo was reminding people that Paul or John or someone else wrote all these words, albeit divinely inspired. Jesus' own sayings, especially in famous long passages like the Sermon on the Mount, repeatedly appear in these sermons, but they were written down by Matthew. Jesus apparently wrote nothing at all, except maybe for these ephemeral words. And of course they were a blank screen on which the theologian or preacher might place almost anything. This is exactly what Jacopo did when he suggested that Jesus was

writing about Mary. As he might have said, nothing in scripture prevented this interpretation, and his motives were certainly pious. What we can know for sure is that Mary was on Jacopo's mind.

Sin was inevitably the principal theme of these model Lenten sermons. The readers and listeners would bring to this subject their own experiences and expectations, as did the preacher. The foundational text of the Lord's Prayer (more below) reminded them all to think about sin as debt. Jacopo reiterated this concept in many sermons, making clear that Jesus had paid their debts at the cross. A commercial society's members would grasp the unearned benefits of this transaction. Implicit was the series of steps required of the debtor to justify this entirely unmerited grace. Jacopo hammered home this process in many sermons. First, one must be contrite, feeling the weight of the sin as debt. He also insisted that his people then confess their sins, in the process truly repenting them, and then atone for their misdeeds through proper acts of penance. No one could listen to Jacopo's sermons for long without getting this point. In a market economy one of the worst crimes was to default on one's debt. Usually by contract the borrower allowed the creditor the right to collect double as penalty, often without recourse to the courts, to settle an unpaid debt. If Genoese merchants and artisans did not honor their debts, a society based on credit would collapse. Everyone understood this. Jacopo could rely on this understanding to remind people what they owed God, not as an abstraction, but in the litany of their daily sins.

Humility was not a trait ordinarily associated with the Genoese. Jesus and especially Mary served in the sermons as exemplars of this virtue. Oddly, it was hard for Jacopo to find a plain human example. What he could do was to analyze humility with the themes of tribulations and adversities, facts of life the Genoese readily appreciated. In the 1270s and 1280s, Liguria was approaching the zenith of its prosperity and power, having crushed the Pisans and extended their trading might deep into the Black Sea. Adversity was something the Genoese brought to their rivals and enemies, though on a personal level everyone knew about sickness, poverty, and death. Everyone died, and all who had enough wealth to dictate last wills wanted their debts paid and placed this obligation before all others on the shoulders of their executors and heirs. This was a matter of personal honor, or in our terms reputation for economic probity. Jacopo vividly sketched out for his congregations the fates of those souls bound for hell because of the burdens of their unrepented sins. People were better off repenting before it was too late, for with the best will in the world the masses they often endowed for their souls might not actually occur or be sufficient to the task of saving them. But on balance Jacopo reassured his flock that the dead were not beyond the

assistance of those still in this world, provided that the deceased were not in hell (or not already in the bosom of Abraham where they would not need it). Yet it was better to repent and pay your debts. Jacopo had almost nothing to say about humans forgiving their debtors, and he certainly skipped every possible reference in Hebrew scripture to the concept of a Jubilee.

Lent began with ashes, and these sermons are full of references to cinders and ashes as signs of mourning. The long road to the cross was an appropriate context for this grief. Explicit meaning seems clear enough here. Ashes resulted from fire, and again many notices of fire in these sermons testify to its purifying powers. The devastating fires occasionally sweeping across medieval Genoa were not experienced as spiritual purification but instead as natural disasters with devastating consequences. The ashes left behind by them were the wreckage of lives and property. Fire on ship at sea or even in the harbor was another calamity. Dirt or earth was something more elemental (literally one of the four elements), and Jacopo had explained at length how God made people from the earth to which they would return at their burial. The earth brought forth life; ashes symbolized death. In this sense people were encouraged in a sermon on Job 30:19 to remember that people came from ashes and would return to them.¹⁶⁶ Every time Jacopo spoke about ashes he reminded people of the fragility of their lives and the possibilities of physical destruction hovering over them.

Money meant wealth to Jacopo, not subsistence, and he usually placed together three concepts that adhered to one another in a way the linguists refer to as “chunking,” where one choice of a word cascades to another. Concerning money, these words are avarice, riches, and Job. Avarice, the realm of the demon Mammon, was the love of money, money as idolatry, clearly a bad thing and a constant moral menace during a commercial revolution. In a sermon in another collection on St. Bartholomew, the apostle to India, Jacopo focuses on skin and its color, not an expected context for avarice. Yet he equated the avaricious man with a body black in appearance, black skin, and an Ethiopian.¹⁶⁷ Avarice was supposed to be a sin with the most terrible associations, so it reveals what at least Jacopo thought to be bad. Avarice was not supposed to animate the merchants and entrepreneurs who were making Liguria rich. Nevertheless, if the markets rewarded risk takers and

166. SQ, no. 197, p. 10, and on p. 13 the quotation “Memento homo quia cinis es et in cinere reverteris.”

167. SS, 332r–333v, here 333r: *avarus* equals *nigredinis corporalis*, *pellis nigra*, and *ethiops*. This is not the place to explore the color symbolism and racism here, except to note that Jacopo equates a most serious sin with blackness and people he calls black.

entrepreneurs, what could motivate these endeavors besides a hope for gain, however it might be concealed? Jacopo knew that what made Liguria more than a backwater was some people's search for profits. But there was a zeal for wealth that was not neighborly, that neglected the poor, that loved money for itself, and Jacopo knew this as avarice and absolutely condemned it. When searching for a way to illustrate avarice, Jacopo often linked it to putrid corruption. Usury, which he understood as the borrowing or lending of money at interest, period, rarely appeared in these sermons.¹⁶⁸ He was a Dominican well schooled in the latest analyses of Thomas Aquinas and his circle. Hence Jacopo understood that certain contexts that we understand as risk premium and opportunity costs justified some forms of interest, while others remained illicit. He was not in the business of explaining the dividing line to his audiences. A pair of sermons devoted to Jesus cleansing the Temple stressed the avarice of the Jews and their priests and mentioned the moneychangers.¹⁶⁹

The label "usurer" was to be avoided because it led to perdition. It was not particularly associated with Jews in Liguria because they were not allowed to enter the credit markets (it was a different matter out in the colonies). The wider context had also taught people that money was indeed the sinews of war, which demanded large quantities of cash at once that could only be obtained through borrowing at interest, seen in this light as a kind of legitimate fee to patriots. No matter the quibbles of some theologians, public borrowing at interest remained an innovative mainstay of the Genoese economy for centuries. Nowhere in these sermons does Jacopo cite Luke 6:35, "Borrow and lend freely, hoping for nothing in return." He knows the Sermon on the Mount like the back of his hand, but Matthew 5:42, "Give to him who asks you, and do not turn away him who would borrow from you," which mentions nothing about interest, also does not appear in these sermons. We must be very cautious about what Jacopo leaves out of these sermons, because there are hundreds more, and because it is impossible to infer motive from what he skips. But if a pattern emerges, we are in my view entitled to speculate. Jacopo thought usury was a sin against God and justice, and he surely believed that some gains were ill gotten. But when it came to calling out the creditors and debtors, often the same person, who were the wellsprings of Genoese prosperity, he did not do it. Yet as we have seen in the ways Jacopo used John's letter, he was tireless in reminding people not

168. SQ, no. 240, p. 240, has a rare link between avarice and usury, as they illustrate the type of sin associated with a continuous fever, presumably for gain.

169. SQ, no. 247, p. 279, and no. 248, p. 284, where he uses the ancient word "nummularii."

to love this world or the things in it. Surely there was an implicit warning to the commercial class here. But an explicit denunciation of usury probably could not please people who lived by it and understood how vexed a subject it was. By the early fourteenth century, Genoese testators began to provide for returning or atoning for what they considered ill-gotten gains, perhaps a belated tribute to this type of preaching.¹⁷⁰

Slavery posed a challenge to Jacopo because it was a familiar enough occurrence in Genoa as wealthy households owned domestic slaves and the Genoese were eager traders of slaves in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁷¹ Slaves appear often enough in the Bible to justify their notice in sermons, so Jacopo had both scriptural authority and contemporary relevance enough to justify his use of slaves as a way to convey lessons. He did not eagerly grasp this opportunity, so once again we may be in danger of reading too much into what in this case are few notices rather than total omissions. In a sermon on the healing of the centurion's slave (*servus*) we saw that Jacopo concluded that it was a sign of Christ's humility that he was prepared to visit a slave, or that a slave was a worthy object of a visit—not the same thing.¹⁷² In the next sermon on the same theme Jacopo equates “puer” and “servus,” “boy” and “slave,” familiar terminology of slavery from ancient Greece to the American South.¹⁷³ In a sermon on the healing of a man blind from birth, Jacopo explains how the bitterness of the Passion could cure blindness in its form of carnal desire. He then offers the view that a slave should not be delighted when he sees his master filled with bitterness or sorrow.¹⁷⁴ This opinion is a non sequitur in context but seems to be an astute observation that slaves may very well rejoice in the misfortunes of their masters provided of course that these do not result in the slave's sale to a worse one. In another sermon Jacopo explicitly

170. For some notices in wills, see ASG, CN, Cart. N. 138, 403r–v, 404r, November 3, 1307: “male ablatis”; Cart. N. 8, 87v–88r, April 6, 1313: “indebite acquisito”; *ibid.*, 154v–155r, July 13, 1313: “de mala paga.” The variety of phrases suggests something recent and not yet formulaic. Such notices were exceptionally rare in thirteenth-century Genoa.

171. Pisa was like Genoa in this regard, but apart from one vague exemplum about slaves (*servi*) disobeying their masters, he has nothing on the theme, Visconti, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, 924. Again, a sign of Jacopo's individual interest in the matter.

172. SQ, no. 198, p. 16; this is interesting but it is all Jacopo has to say here about slavery.

173. SQ, no. 200, p. 22, but this sermon is mostly on the humility of the centurion.

174. SQ, no. 251, p. 300: “quia servus non debet deliciari, quando videt dominum amaritudinis repleri.” The editor did not identify any source for these words, nor does the Brepols Cross Database, accessed December 21, 2012. There is, however, a faint echo from the book of Ruth 1:20, where Naomi says she should not be called her name, which means “delight” in Hebrew, but instead Mara, “bitterness,” because the Lord dealt bitterly with her. Neither Naomi nor Ruth were slaves. Jacopo's only citation from Ruth is this very passage, which he uses for a quite different purpose, to sketch out how Mary had bitter experiences, SQ, no. 286, p. 510.

ties together the themes of avarice and slavery (at first glance an incongruous pairing) by quoting Colossians 3:5, “avarice is the image of slavery.”¹⁷⁵

Finally, when preaching on the prodigal son, Jacopo is moved to explain the difference between a slave, a wage earner, and a son. “A slave abstains from sin only from fear, a wage laborer works in consideration of his pay and avoids giving offense [to his employer, here by extension does not sin], the son serves only from love and shuns offense [sin].”¹⁷⁶ Explicitly we have here just as good an explanation for why people work as for why they sin. Implicitly we learn that Jacopo knew well that the fear slaves experienced came from the threats of violence from the master, a right they enjoyed virtually without limit in thirteenth-century Liguria. Elsewhere, Jacopo explicitly stated that slavery followed the condition of the mother, a point he never applied to Mary.¹⁷⁷ What is interesting is that Jacopo surely knew that in his Genoa a man or woman might in fact be all three: an enslaved child of their father, rented out for a wage the master pocketed.

Let us note that Matthew 5–7, the Sermon on the Mount, was itself the kind of work Jacopo was emulating. It contained some of the most explicit teaching by Jesus on a variety of subjects. Matthew was one of Jacopo’s favorite books, and he cited verses from these chapters at least thirty-five times. Hence it seems an appropriate test case for looking again at the delicate matter of what Jacopo cites, and what he does not. What can we make of the fact that he does not cite the Golden Rule anywhere, and when duly noting that the proud will not be able to enter the narrow gate, he does not mention the few who find it?¹⁷⁸ The Lord’s Prayer provides him with very little to cite—can this be because the Paternoster was so familiar, or was some other factor at work? No notice at all of the kingdom to come, the hallowing of God’s name (a congenial theme to a student of language?), or even the daily bread—an odd omission for someone who brought up farina on numerous occasions and was deeply concerned about the poor. Only in our sermon at the beginning of this chapter did Jacopo cite Matthew 6:12, and as we noted it was the concluding sentence of the sermon, with no commentary. Jacopo was surely talking about debts as sins rather than calling

175. SQ, no. 278, p. 462: “*Servus est avarus, Col. III ‘Avaritia que est simulacrorum servitus.’*” KJV is misleading here with its “covetousness, which is idolatry”; reasons of its own for deprecating slavery in the Bible?

176. SQ, no. 229, pp. 180–81: “*Servus est qui solo timore abstinet a peccato, mercenarius est qui in intuitu mercedis servit et cavet offensam, filius est qui solo amore servit et offensam vitat.*”

177. SD, 323r, as in Roman and Genoese law.

178. SQ, no. 246, p. 278, citing Matt. 7:14; he does not cite anything from 7:7 to this, so he also omits much on prayer.

for a debt holiday in Liguria. But he was not reluctant to point out to his audience the bad Christians and poor preachers who might lead them astray and whom the Lord would deny even knowing.¹⁷⁹ Implicitly and explicitly, Jacopo was not including himself among that number.

The early sermons, be they on saints, feast days, or other topics, were models, hence exercises and not intended to be biographies or examples of thorough biblical exegesis. Although Jacopo used a wide variety of sources, he arranged these pieces of a mosaic, along with his own ideas, to design distinctive messages we can see as his own. His favorite biblical passages, from the Sermon on the Mount or John's first epistle, reveal a preacher as at home with the subtleties of the Beatitudes as with salvation and love, the major theme of the sermons. The canons of the genre required Jacopo to think about the Christian past almost exclusively for how it should be applied to the current circumstances of believers, as in the matter of usury. He probably took comfort from the words of Humbert of Romans, who succinctly observed that without preaching, the church (Christianity) would not have spread.¹⁸⁰ Two of Jacopo's favorite disciplines, demonology and angelology as we would call them, were prime examples of subjects rooted in the Bible but also with immediate practical influences on the living. None of these sermons was intended for people Jacopo counted as pagan idolaters or unbelievers. Nor was the past important for its own sake.

Given the occasions for these sermons, we should not be surprised that a routine sermon on the obscure apostle Matthias turns out to be mainly about Judas, not a person Jacopo would choose as the announced subject.¹⁸¹ The towering authority in Jacopo's imagination and memory was Augustine, who as a preacher and author he knew very well. I think Jacopo cited *The City of God* more frequently than all the pagan ancient authors altogether, and many of the passages from them really come from Augustine. Jacopo's sermons on his mentor (along with Dominic) come closest to biography, where he records details about Augustine's travels gleaned from the *Confessions* that stand out as signs of curiosity about a person and not simply his allegorical possibilities. At the same time as composing these model sermons, Jacopo was taking up another work, *The Golden Legend*, which gave him the chance to apply a different set of abilities to the Christian past.

179. SQ, no. 245, p. 269, and no. 266, p. 387, explicitly on Matt. 7:22.

180. Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicatorum*, 378: "sine praedicatione non esset Ecclesia fundata."

181. SS, 119r; Judas clearly killed himself in this version, motivated by sadness and compunction.

CHAPTER 2

Holy Days

Jacopo da Varagine, truly a metahagiographer in his great work, known as *The Golden Legend*, drew upon a rich and complex collection of sources in compiling and writing his book of saints' lives and other feasts of the liturgical calendar. Since our purpose is to learn about Jacopo's mind and how it worked, we must try to disentangle what he decanted or reprocessed from the writings of others, and what was truly original about his book.¹ His overall vision for the work was of course his own, wherever he acquired the details. Once we have a clear sense of his sources, we will be in a good position to understand how and where he moved beyond them by creating from his materials a fresh composite. Compiling this work occurred at the same time Jacopo was composing model sermons, and the motivation was probably the same: to help preachers.

1. For a close look at the issue of originality, mostly concerning the life of St. Bartholomew, see Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, "Aspetti originali della 'Legenda Aurea' di Iacopo Da Varazze," *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 4 (1990): 143–201. He found the originality to be in the narrative, moral lessons, and teaching. For more on the style and structure of the *LA*, see Reglinde Rhein, *Die Legenda Aurea des Jacobus de Voragine: Die Entfaltung von Heiligkeit in "Historia" und "Doctrina"* (Cologne, 1995), especially 41–43, and the older but still important study by Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of its Paradoxical History* (Madison, 1985), especially for its *Nachleben*.

Many scholars have devoted a great deal of time to identifying Jacopo's sources, especially his most recent editor, Giovanni Paolo Maggioni.² Most readers have been disappointed that Jacopo was so uninterested in popular culture and did not draw upon it for anecdotes on saints. Instead, he privileged written sources and bookish traditions. There is common agreement that a book on the deeds of the saints composed by Bartholomew of Trent (ca. 1200–54?/1270s?) was Jacopo's main source and inspiration.³ This work contains 355 entries, including 280 saints' lives, 15 entries on Christ and Mary, and 60 liturgical feasts, and was intended to serve preachers as a brief and useful handbook for the yearly liturgical calendar. Two things are important about his work. First, according to his editor Emore Paoli, Bartholomew's list of saints agrees 70 percent with the Roman saints' calendar, a work Jacopo knew independently and one that naturally influenced the canonical list of saints across Europe. Second, Bartholomew was also following in someone's footsteps, in his case a fellow Dominican Jean de Mailly, the author of a collection of saints' lives redacted between 1225 and 1246.⁴ Hence one liturgical strand descends from Rome and its calendar of saints deriving in turn from even older sources like the *Liber Pontificalis*, and *The Lives of the Fathers*, an ancient collection of biographies of the desert saints of Roman Egypt. Jacopo knew all these sources, but so too did each one of his long line of predecessors in the genre. André Vauchez noted that Dominicans in the

2. *LA*. In my view this edition relies on but supersedes (because of a wider consultation of manuscripts) the third edition of Theodor Graesse (1890; repr. Osnabrück, 1969). Maggioni prints the best text that he presumes Jacopo revised over the years 1272–76 (*LA*, xiv). Someone revised the work, but our search for how Jacopo's mind worked relies on a very cautious approach to revisions and sources. Scholarly work done before 1998 and all English translations thus far from the collection derive from the older edition. Another edition, *LA2*, reprints the 1998 text with some revisions, notably incorporating some new sources identified in a French translation of 2005. This text also has a valuable commentary on the lives, and a fine Italian translation. Yet even this text shows the work in progress that any edition of the *LA* actually is. Some new sources, like Humbert of Romans on training preachers, now appear in the notes, but other important ones, like Hugh of Saint-Cher, have still escaped the editors and will continue to do so until extant databases are brought to bear on the problem. The more we learn about Jacopo, the more he appears to borrow, the more he has read, and above all, the more the great plan of things is his own.

3. BdeT, for what follows, especially 26–35. For background on this text, see Antoine Dondaine, "Barthélemy de Trente O. P.," *Archivium Fratrum Praedicatorum* 45 (1975): 79–105.

4. There is in print only a French translation by Antoine Dondaine of this long work, Jean de Mailly, *Abrégé des Gestes et miracles des saints* (Paris, 1947); later collections kept this one from making it into the age of print. A slightly older source, by Sicard, bishop of Cremona (1185–1215), known as *Mitralis*, was a hybrid of a work explaining the liturgical calendar, but also contained a long section on saints' days; see Sicard of Cremona, *Mitralis de officiis*, ed. Gábor Sarbak and Lorenz Weinrich (Turnhout, 2008), 632–79.

thirteenth century were particularly interested in old saints from the early days of Christianity.⁵

Close to his own time, Jacopo also learned from the *Agiographia* of Ugucione da Pisa, where he found especially useful etymologies of the names of saints; the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor, a rewriting of biblical and early church history as a seamless whole; the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, a great collection of historical extracts from ancient and medieval sources; stories from his near contemporary John of Beleth's *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, an explication of the liturgical calendar; Stephen of Bourbon, from his *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*; and above all the Bible.⁶ As we will see, Jacopo also drew upon a great many other works for details on particular saints and feasts. These layers of authorities make it difficult to trace the exact sources Jacopo used in any particular entry, except for the most recent saints and feasts.⁷ Here, we will test Jacopo consistently against Bartholomew of Trent and John of Beleth, and also look for those places where he is clearly relying mostly on his own powers of both synthesis and originality. Jacopo could not include everyone. In 1307 a Genoese woman left money for someone to read aloud the legend of St. Brendan in church; this tale does not appear in *The Golden Legend*.⁸

Alain Boureau has also done a great deal of fine work on Jacopo's sources, so we do not have to reinvent the wheel.⁹ Since much of the material for the lives derived from other sources, Jacopo inherited many of his citations

5. André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), 120.

6. I have consulted the following editions of these texts: Ugucione da Pisa, *De Dubio Accentu, Agiographia*, ed. Giuseppe Cremasoli (Spoleto, 1978); Peter Comestor, *Scholastica Historia, Liber Genesis*, ed. A. Sylwan (Turnhout, 2005); Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* (Strasbourg, 1473/74); John of Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Herbert Douteil (Turnhout, 1976), hereafter JdB; Stephen of Bourbon, *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, ed. Jacques Berlioz (Turnhout, 2002); *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, ed. B. Fischer et al. (Stuttgart, 1975). Maggioni has recently uncovered another Dominican source in manuscript, the *Lectionarium Sanctoralis* by Humbert of Romans. The forty-odd references to this work mostly confirm the authors of an original life and many are commonplaces. None of the long, original entries use this source; see the list in *LA2*, 1728–29.

7. M. B. Parkes, "The Compilation of the Dominican Lectionary" (2000), in *Pages from the Past: Medieval Writing Skills and Manuscript Books*, ed. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Farnham, 2012), no. XIII, 103–5, argues that Humbert's contemporary lectionary may draw upon Jacopo's work, which in turn (see previous note) used Humbert's.

8. ASG, CN, Cart. N. 138, 90v–91r.

9. Alain Boureau, *La Légende dorée: Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine (†1298)* (Paris, 1984), tables on 78–91, for what follows. He used the older edition, and he did not worry much about the ultimate or actual source for a citation—hence only two citations of Vincent of Beauvais, while in fact a great many of his references to other authors actually come from this compiler. Boureau also directed the 2005 French edition and translation of the *LA*.

(complicating the role of the Bible), so they do not necessarily reflect his own habits of thought or reading. With these limitations in mind, some of the findings are important. First, the authorities Jacopo was likely to know directly, even if he picked up a quotation from another work: Augustine (92), Gregory the Great (56), Jerome (48), Ambrose (43), Bede (23), and Jacopo's model preacher and thinker Bernard of Clairvaux (70). The heavy reliance on early church fathers reflects the reality of the liturgical calendar; so many saints were martyrs under the pagan Roman Empire. Also, weighty names like Augustine's lent authority to any subsequent work. Books of the Bible appear everywhere but especially in those chapters on church feasts and so they are more likely to reflect Jacopo's preferences, and they also give us a basis for comparison for the other numbers: Old Testament, Isaiah (19), Psalms (46); New Testament, Matthew (21), Luke (32), John (31), Acts (22), Romans (15), Corinthians (14), Revelation (14). The overall numbers, 178 citations from Hebrew scripture and 195 citations from the New Testament, suggest a more balanced use of the Bible, though of course the Old Testament is much longer than the New. Some of these patterns also occurred in Jacopo's use of scripture in his sermons, like his love for the Psalter, but for now we note the relative absence of Mark (4) and the small number from all of the Pentateuch (18, and 10 of them from Genesis) as symptomatic of Jacopo's tastes.

Boureau also found only the slightest trace of any classical learning in Jacopo; just one reference each to Pliny, Macrobius, and Philo, and that is it for all of Greek and Roman classical authors. They clearly did not appear in Jacopo's secondary authorities either, and in a collection of saints' lives we perhaps should not expect someone like Virgil or Cicero to matter.¹⁰ Still, even their use of language, or some favorite phrase from a poet, does not appear in Jacopo's own prose. It seems his mind was not well stocked with classical learning. Apparent references to Josephus in Latin translation (13) outweigh all of it. Finally two references to Maimonides and one to the Quran may be seen as astonishingly open-minded in a collection like this, or another sign of Jacopo's intellectual horizons. Muslims still lived in southern Italy; there were Muslim slaves in Genoa and merchants and translators familiar with the world of Islam.¹¹

10. Maggioni in *L42*, 1081, found in the life of St. Maurice one quotation from Juvenal on Thebes, but in fact the passage comes from Jean de Mailly.

11. For more on Jacopo and Islam, see chapter 5.

Boureau characterizes Jacopo's references as almost exclusively clerical since his sources are about 80 percent strictly religious in nature.¹² He has also found that seventy-one of the chapters rely on only one authority (usually the *Liber Pontificalis* or *The Lives of the Fathers* or the acts or lives of the saint).¹³ When Jacopo had a famous predecessor like Sulpicius Severus who wrote the life of St. Martin of Tours, that work as his fundamental source would provide a large number of citations, depending on how we might count them. But it is better to keep these in mind as a class of lives, and Boureau identified thirty-eight of them.¹⁴ These findings left Boureau with a large number of chapters he considered to have been compiled from various sources, but I think there is another way to separate out from this long list a smaller group of chapters in which Jacopo is at his most original, and in some cases hardly a compiler at all. In this list we have the best chance to follow his mind at work.

The usual title of Jacopo's work suggests that it is only a collection of saints' lives, but that is not actually the case. First, the liturgical calendar also contained a number of feast days that will repay close attention: Advent, Christmas, the Holy Innocents, Circumcision, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, All Saints, and All Souls.¹⁵ Second, the recently assembled feasts of Mary—Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, and Nativity—form a unit across the calendar giving Jacopo chances to expand on some of his favorite themes. Third, there are chapters primarily concerned with days we might call ecclesiastical: the discovery and exaltation of the cross, the conversion of St. Paul, the chair and chains of St. Peter, the Litanies, and the beheading of John the Baptist. Fourth, there are some special saints to consider. Michael was the only angel to be a saint, or, conversely, the only nonhuman, and his life allowed Jacopo to dwell on angelic topics, always a favorite of his. The lives of the apostles and authors important to Jacopo like Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard are also revealing. The lives of John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene inevitably drew on the Bible, but also gave Jacopo the opportunity to explain their *Nachleben*, especially interesting in the case of the prized bones and heads of the Baptist. Lastly, Jacopo's

12. Boureau, *La Légende dorée*, 83.

13. *Ibid.*, 88–89.

14. *Ibid.*, 90.

15. Jacopo did not include the feast of Corpus Christi, formalized in 1264, possibly because it was too new, or too northern. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), 109, notices Jacopo but does not ponder why he did not include the feast in the *LA*.

thirteenth century provided only four but very important lives: Dominic, Francis, Peter Martyr, and Elizabeth of Hungary.¹⁶ A chart of chapters by the century of their subject would reveal a great cluster in apostolic times and the centuries of persecution before Constantine, then a low level of activity that tapers off to *almost* nothing in Jacopo's time. He was not unaware of this trend. Jacopo's Roman sources as well as liturgical traditions dictated that so many of his saints came from the heroic age of martyrdom and persecution in the first three centuries of Christianity. Other eras offered different opportunities to potential holy men and women as confessors or miracle workers. Dying for the faith required some power to do the killing—pagans or heretics. His explanations for what we might call the relative decline of miracles and martyrs, as well as saints, made Jacopo face the problem of change over time, and so he had to think like the historian that he would become.

Summarizing these chapters would be a tedious work and far from the purpose of exploring how Jacopo thought. Instead, we will focus on the themes—feasts and sanctity, suicide and martyrdom, Jews and pagans—Jacopo chose to emphasize in the entries giving him the widest scope for originality. The reader recognizes that my sense of what is original in Jacopo depends on my own views of what is interesting or original. This filter is inevitable. Jacopo's views on time and history, the grand sweep from Creation to the World to Come, also shape what he decided, within the parameters of the Christian calendar, to dwell upon at length. My discussions of these chapters are conclusions, not summaries, based on my analysis of them.

Advent

Any calendar must begin somewhere. Although Jacopo has his authorities, especially the Roman liturgical model, he was acutely conscious of ordering time, and his beginning is Advent, the four weeks leading to the New Year in Genoa, Christmas, December 25.¹⁷ This is an unusual chapter because it covers a long space of time, and what can he really write about Advent, beyond that

16. As Robert Bartlett emphasizes, the increasing rigor of papal canonizations resulted in only forty new "official" saints between 1198 and 1500, with a majority in the thirteenth century; see his *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, 2013), 59–60. Still, Jacopo left out the vast majority of his century's saints. See *ibid.*, 546–58, for comments on the genre of saints' lives rewritten, here called *legendaries*, and 554–56 for Jacopo's work, detached from Genoa and his other writings.

17. *LA*, 11–23.

it is a time of waiting, but in his sense for repentance and renewal? In brief Jacopo makes this long entry about the Last Judgment and sin. What he wrote about here was the damned and the saved, Satan and Antichrist, and these are a necessary corrective to the ostensible joys of Advent or even a calendar of saints and feasts. But sin and the devil were never far from this preacher's mind, and we must always remember when trying to understand Jacopo's thinking that the primary intended audience was his fellow preachers.

Jacques Le Goff has also looked closely at the prologue, and he interprets it as showing how Jacopo worked to sacralize time and by doing so promoted the "enchantment of the world."¹⁸ Time has been a central theme of Le Goff's study of the Middle Ages for some time, and he is right to point out that Jacopo divided the religious calendar into times of renovation, reconciliation, deviation, and pilgrimage, as opposed to other secular possibilities like the four seasons or quarters. But by placing *The Golden Legend* in its broader context of Genoa, sources, and above all Jacopo's other works, we see that the idea of a liturgical calendar drove Jacopo's purposes here. His intended audience needed no lectures on privileging the rhythm of saints' days and feasts over the patterns of a secular calendar, even if these preachers and students could conceive such a thing. Their world, like Jacopo's, was already suffused with God; it needed no further enchantment.

And yet Jacopo always thought carefully about time and its passage, so he asks a characteristic and interesting question: why didn't Christ come sooner? Jacopo found this question in Augustine's book on John the Evangelist.¹⁹ He knew Augustine's work very well, and they shared many interests, including here the relevant themes of chronology and time. Augustine's answer, which satisfied Jacopo, was that until that very moment when Christ was born, the fullness of time or the appropriate time for liberating us from time had not yet arrived. Jacopo was fully comfortable with a concept of Providence containing a preordained plan in which everything had been ordered for the best, from the beginning of time. Problems of duration and sequence mattered in human ideas about time; God was above these concerns, in a kind of timeless present. Jacopo was not going to ask any blasphemous questions implying that there was some better schedule. Nor was Augustine. The point of asking was to remind readers of the right moment.

18. Jacques Le Goff, *A la recherche du temps sacré: Jacques de Voragine et la Légende dorée* (Paris, 2011), 12–13, drawing on the later disenchantment of the world as proposed by Marcel Gauchet, but no notice of C. S. Lewis and his previous "discarded image" argument.

19. *LA*, 12: "Quare non ante venit Christus?" crisp and to the point.

Much of this chapter concerns reasons for the Incarnation, a venerable theme for which Jacopo drew on his favorite authors, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bernard. Jerome supplied him with no less than fifteen signs of the Last Judgment, a list he may have obtained via Stephen of Bourbon.²⁰ Among these terrible events was a devastating series of earthquakes that would not leave a person or animal standing, but all would be prostrate before the sun. The theme of natural disasters suffuses Jerome's list, and Jacopo was very interested in these occurrences as traditional portents of things to come. But again, we should ask: what does any of this have to do with Advent? Perhaps the time of renewal prompted Jacopo to think about the end of times. Jacopo produces a learned discourse on the end times packed with venerable authorities. He introduces calamity into a time of joy. He gives the impression of dutifully turning the crank of theology in this chapter. Perhaps many readers across the centuries feared that the rest of the book would be like this, and so they mined *The Golden Legend* for nuggets of material rather than reading it as a composite with some overarching purpose. In fact Jacopo had designed his work according to a plan to cover everything. The chapter on Christmas reveals the pitfalls of selective reading.

Christmas

This chapter is one of Jacopo's masterpieces and is an excellent test for looking in *The Golden Legend* for evidence on how Jacopo thought. Christmas is perhaps the most familiar story ever told, so we can watch Jacopo selecting certain themes and expanding on them while leaving out others.

Jacopo calls this day the Birth of the Lord, and his main authorities are Bartholomew of Trent, Jean de Mailly, Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*, and an apocryphal infancy gospel now known as Pseudo-Matthew.²¹ Jacopo preferred the works of his recent fellow Dominicans like Bartholomew and Vincent. He probably understood that there was something unreliable about the infancy gospel, but it filled a gap in his knowledge. Jacopo was the kind of scholar who did not like gaps in his sources. For this chapter, however, Jacopo goes well beyond his sources and shows that he is far more than a drudge compiling the facts and thoughts of others.

Chronology is the first issue because Jacopo wants to securely locate this event in the distant past. This is one of the innumerable instances

20. *LA*, 16–17; Maggioni rightly credits Stephen, but the choice to put it here was Jacopo's.

21. *LA*, 63–74.

demonstrating that Jacopo thought like a historian and had an acute sense of perspective on the past. Jesus was born 5,228 years after Adam, or according to Eusebius 5,199, in the time of Emperor Augustus. Jacopo understood that accounts of Old Testament chronology varied and that eminent scholars made different calculations. But he had a sure grasp of the intervening centuries from the Nativity as a Christian epoch stretching from this birth to the Second Coming, a period of history, and he was somewhere at a point on this continuum, one suspects he hoped close to the end. Like the good preacher he was, Jacopo used chronology to help his readers and listeners to experience and to appreciate the sweep of narrative of sacred history as including them, as relevant to their lives.

Since the Annunciation, Epiphany (the magi), and the Circumcision receive their own extended analyses as frames of this event, Jacopo begins here with the story of Mary and Joseph as they are approaching Bethlehem. Jacopo states here that he is relying on Brother Bartholomew's "compilation" on the Savior's infancy, so he knew the strengths and limitations of such a work, and plainly aimed higher.²² Jacopo portrays a practical Joseph who has brought along on this journey his own donkey and cow, presumably for transportation and something to sell to pay his tax. These animals are a familiar pairing throughout scripture and perhaps, along with the mule, the most essential to humans. The couple set up in an alley between two buildings where there was some sort of work place; Jacopo is thinking about this scene as an urban person. Joseph put together a manger (*praesepe*) for his animals, or according to another account the rural people in the area came to the *forum* and constructed the manger for him. Again evoking a city, Jacopo in his choice of words has come close to saying that Jesus was born in an open square or even a market, hence a public and well-known event. One detail here is worth keeping in mind, and it concerns the hay Mary was laying on when she gave birth. Jacopo notes that Empress Helena brought to Rome some of this hay (in the early fourth century). This hay will appear later because of its subsequent miraculous qualities. The author of a long entry on St. Francis knew perfectly well that Francis had in a way reintroduced the Nativity crèche into Christian practice in the thirteenth century, and that in this case as well the hay was associated with miracles, especially easing childbirth and curing sick

22. *LA*, 65, "compilatio." Le Goff is correct to point out that we should expect no chapter on Joseph, unlike Mary, as he is not a saint in Jacopo's world, canonized only in 1870: *A la recherche du temps sacré*, 90.

livestock. There was no cause to mention Francis here, and Jacopo almost never made any current reference in these chapters about the deep past, so scrupulous was he to avoid anachronism or ahistorical thinking or a vapid appeal to relevance. Hence his chapters are compartmentalized and do not refer to one another.

Jacopo, having briskly recounted the birth, had fulfilled the basic purpose of the entry and was now free to look at those aspects most interesting to him. Explaining what was miraculous about the virgin birth was his first task. Without locating this event in the broader context of extraordinary reproduction, Jacopo nevertheless knew that this birth was a unique occurrence of a woman producing a child without a man.²³ Isaiah provided the scriptural prediction of this fact, but it is Jacopo who wanders into the issue of midwives—he is struck by the fact that Mary managed without one. Women did not give birth alone if they could help it in Jacopo's world, and he learned from Pseudo-Matthew that Joseph had called Zebel and Salome to assist in the birth, proof that ancient times were not unfamiliar with the profession.²⁴ Now Jacopo knew that the canonical gospels mentioned no midwives or angelic help at the birth. His education taught him to see that these apocryphal accounts were not authoritative or to be entirely trusted. It seems he wanted to stress two points about which the Gospels were distressingly vague: more proof that Mary was a virgin, and allaying any doubts about the story of the birth by making clear that of course midwives were present.

By this point Jacopo is deep into the miraculous aspects of the birth, and he draws on a sermon by Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) to locate the event in secular history.²⁵ The pope was probably interested in helping Romans to think about their city in the past, but Jacopo's concerns were a little different. At the time of the Nativity Rome had been at peace for twelve years, and the Romans had built a most beautiful temple of peace, placing there a statue of Romulus. They consulted an oracle of Apollo about how long the temple would endure, and they were told that it would last until a virgin gave birth. The Romans took this to mean it would last forever, but in fact it fell down that night (the Nativity), on the site in Rome now occupied by the church of Santa Maria Nuova. The archeology of medieval Rome was

23. See Maaike van der Lugt, *Le ver, le démon et la Vierge: Les théories de la génération extraordinaire* (Paris, 2004); the parallel is of course Adam in a sense producing Eve without a woman.

24. *LA*, 66. These women also offered further proof that Mary was indeed a virgin.

25. Innocent III, *Sermo XII in Purificatione Sanctae Mariae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 177 (Paris, 1855), cols. 457–58, is most relevant here.

not the subject here, nor any confusion between the Altar of Peace and the Temple of Janus. Jacopo had no doubt been to Rome, and he certainly knew this famous sermon by a well-respected pope. Bethlehem was far away and in Jacopo's time lost to Christians; Rome was closer.

Besides adding another piece of evidence for the virgin birth, this sermon also led Jacopo to some relevant information from Anselm of Canterbury, an author Jacopo might very well have run across at university, but whose thoughts on the Nativity clearly came from Innocent's sermon. Anselm's famous interest in the Incarnation, as retold by Innocent and then repackaged by Jacopo, concerned four types of reproduction: without a man or a woman, as Adam; from a man without a woman, as Eve; from a man and a woman, as usual; and from a woman without a man, the miracle of Jesus' birth.²⁶ Jacopo has a lot to say about the various levels and meanings then and today of this miraculous birth, mostly drawn from Innocent or sources suggested in that sermon. Family life and reproduction always interested Jacopo. A continuous focus on Rome comes from the sermon but also must have engaged Jacopo on some level because he repeats all the details, down to an edifying story about Emperor Augustus and the Sibylline books. By incorporating all this material into *The Golden Legend*, Jacopo will make these details much better known. For example, Jacopo cites Albumasar for an obscure astrological detail about the meaning of the star.²⁷ Since he offers no identity for this writer, he must be assuming his educated readers would know the name, like so many other authorities not explained in this work. But now Jacopo made the name more famous.

Perhaps the most startling "fact" Jacopo introduces about the Nativity's miraculous character is that on that night all the sodomites in the world were extinguished (destroyed) so that a prophecy by Isaiah about the light of the world might be fulfilled as discussed by Jerome.²⁸ If Jacopo silently

26. LA, 67; these four types are one of the main subjects of van der Lugt's *Le ver, le démon et la Vierge*.

27. LA, 70; the editor did not locate any source for this quotation. Still the case in LA2, 1475. This name is the Latinized Abu Ma 'shar, a ninth-century court astrologer to the Abbasids in Baghdad.

28. Jacopo's source here is the early thirteenth-century Dominican biblical scholar Hugh of Saint-Cher: *Postilla Hugonis de Sancto Charo*, ed. N. Pezzana (Venice, 1703) 7:209, col. b. This famous discussion of 1 Tim. 1:10 introduces Peter the Chanter as his source. John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France around 1200* (Chicago, 1994), 282, n. 5, could not find where Peter or Jerome made these comments, and neither can I. The 2007 edition, LA2, still misses Hugh of Saint-Cher and all of this commentary. Scholars using Jacopo for their research interests often do not read across the genres of his writings.

relies on Hugh of Saint-Cher here (and not some intermediary source), he paraphrases the biblical commentator and drops the scriptural references to 1 Timothy 1:10, 1 Corinthians 6, and Genesis 18.²⁹ Jacopo's originality is to transpose this material to Christmas and make it widely known. In our terms, Jesus could not be born into a world where gay people existed. Jacopo goes on to cite Augustine as the authority for the view that God, seeing this vice against nature to have appeared in human nature, almost desisted from the Incarnation.³⁰ Jacopo brings in the people he labels as sodomites in passing here; they simply appear in a long list of miraculous occurrences surrounding the Nativity. It would be a mistake to exaggerate their place here. Yet there is a pointed meaning to the presumed audience, the preachers whom Jacopo believed needed reminding about these sodomites. He takes it as common knowledge that they sinned against nature, but he distinguishes this from what he explicitly calls human nature, where the sin had become fixed. (Did that mean, again in our terms, that the trait could be inherited?) Anything that could be called unnatural was going to be a bad thing in Jacopo's book, so in this sense the sodomites joined a long list of sinners, not at first glance worse or better than the others. But there is also this question of their eradication from the face of the earth, somehow temporary because they had certainly in some mysterious way reappeared.³¹ This ephemeral extinction made the sin of the sodomites worse than the idolaters, murderers, and all the others whose polluting presence in this world would have not been sufficient to forestall the Incarnation. So even though the observation

29. *LA*, 72; his exact words are important here: "Sicut etiam manifesta est per sodomitas qui omnes in toto mundo in illa nocte extincti sunt, sicut dicit Ieronimus super illud 'Lux orta est eis tanta,' scilicet quod omnes laborantes illo vitio extinxit." Jerome in his commentary on Isaiah does not mention anything like this, and I have been unable, like Maggioni, to locate the exact source. It may be that somewhere in the vast opus of Jerome lays the inspiration for this thought, but more likely in my view is that it was original to Jacopo; he surely popularized it. His more immediate sources have been identified, most recently by William Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge, 2004), 207. See also 19–23 for a good treatment of just what "sodomy" meant, a catchall term for all sorts of people to be deprecated, but clearly here gays. See Joan Cadden, *Nothing Natural Is Shameful: Sodomy and Science in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2013) for the scientific perspective from commentators on Aristotle.

30. *LA*, 72; again the Latin is important: "Nam, ut dicit Augustinus, videns deus vitium contra naturam in humana natura fieri, fere desiit incarnari." This quotation properly points out God's incarnating of himself, using a verb usually translated as "made flesh." I have searched the Brepols Latin databases and other sources and found no place where Augustine uses these words, or any similar to them, to express this thought. This may be a sign that Jacopo is retailing an unreliable source, or that he is misremembering something he read. The opinion certainly does not derive from Innocent's sermon.

31. I discuss this scenario in my *Medieval Discovery of Nature* (Cambridge, 2012), 108–9.

about gays appears minor, in fact Jacopo has in a way privileged sodomy as a uniquely unnatural sin.³² Certainly the punishment inflicted was special. He is telling us something about the way he thinks, but interpreting this style of thought is difficult. Perhaps some types of sin were so entrenched in human nature that they survived the deaths of all those practicing them: was Jacopo recognizing that there were gay people who did not “labor” over their nature or inclination? He may have known such people among his fellow Dominicans. More than this we cannot say.

Jacopo wraps up his chapter on the Nativity with a Christmas miracle story about Hugh of Cluny, some sage words from Bernard about how Jesus must have adjusted to human existence, and a learned comment of his own on humility. This last point makes clear that above all Jacopo wanted to emphasize two aspects of the Nativity: Mary’s virginity and Jesus’ humanity. Making sure that his readers understood that these were real if exceptional people mattered to Jacopo. He does not tell us why he used the birth to adduce so much evidence for stressing the physicality of these events. Some ancient heresies, known to Jacopo as historical curiosities, had questioned the human nature of Christ. In his own time this Dominican knew very well how the Perfect Ones, also known by a Greek word for purity as Cathars, challenged the teachings of the institutional church about the nature of Christ and the power of evil, among other matters. “Catharism” left only faint traces in Liguria, and Genoa may have been a transit point or a place of temporary respite for refugees from Languedoc in midcentury.³³ Liguria, in general, was not hospitable to heterodoxy, even if it was by no means an uncritical follower of the pope, unless he was Genoese. Jacopo’s mind was entirely orthodox and combative, and his work may have been one of the reasons why this region needed no inquisitions or crusades to secure its loyalty to Rome.

32. By way of contrast, Federico Visconti mentioned sodomy three times in his first two sermons: twice in a list of sins, and once to note that it was an abomination of demons; see *Les sermons et la visite pastorale de Federico Visconti archevêque de Pise (1253–1277)*, ed. Nicole Bériou et al. (Rome, 2001), 336, 338, 358.

33. A deposition from 1277/78 noted a small community of heretics from Languedoc living in Genoa; see Peter Biller, Caterina Bruschi, and Shelagh Sneddon, eds. and trans., *Inquisitors and Heretics in Thirteenth-Century Languedoc: Edition and Translation of Toulouse Inquisition Depositions 1273–1282*, (Leiden, 2011), 790–93. John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Cultural Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, 1991), 29, has a few references to inquisitional activities in sixteenth-century Genoa, but I have not been able find any such medieval records in Genoa or Rome.

The Holy Innocents

Jacopo's entry for this feast on December 28 merits a brief notice not for its content per se, for Jacopo is curiously uninterested in these children or their fate. Herod initiated the massacre of these children, who would otherwise have lived. What he wants to write about is Herod, a figure he had not discussed before.³⁴ Hence this holy day must point to Herod, and perhaps some preachers no longer understood this. Drawing on Peter Comestor and Vincent of Beauvais, Jacopo takes care to distinguish Herod of Ascalon (the Great), Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa, but naturally spends the most time on the first Herod down to his grisly end. Cassiodorus and an infancy gospel provide details on the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt. Jacopo the historian is most engaged in the question of when the decision to massacre these innocents was made. This was a disputed matter because Jacopo's authorities have left him perplexed. In order for Herod to have given the orders, the massacre had to take place two years, and perhaps as many as five, after the birth of Jesus. An additional irony appealed to Jacopo. A son of Herod was in Bethlehem to be nursed, and he was also killed.³⁵

Jacopo knows several accounts of Herod's death, and his choice of which one to use for his chapter is interesting. Herod is seventy and afflicted with a terrible illness causing him to swell up, smell, and have worms. It was Herod's custom to eat an apple after dining. Having a sword in his hand and coughing violently, he looked around to see if there were anyone who might stop him, and then he tried to stab himself but was stopped by a relative. In any case he immediately died. Jacopo notes another version from Remigius of Auxerre where clearly Herod killed himself with this sword.³⁶ It is characteristic of Jacopo not to choose between the two versions, but he usually

34. *LA*, 97–102. Bartholomew of Trent also concentrated on Herod, but Jacopo's account differs considerably from his, *BdeT*, 15–16.

35. *LA*, 100; Jacopo credits Macrobius and a certain chronicle as his sources for this. He has no idea who Macrobius is.

36. *LA*, 102; the phrase he gets from Remigius is "se peremit," destroyed or did away with himself. Bartholomew of Trent, unlike Jacopo, notes that the Innocents were buried in Bethlehem but are now in the church of St. Paul in Rome. He has nothing about the apple and simply recounts that Herod died miserably. Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages: The Curse of Self Murder* (Oxford, 2000), 343–56, has a fine discussion of the medieval traditions on this suicide; the apple story comes from Josephus (345), probably via Eusebius to Jacopo, whose work is discussed on 355–56. Murray considers this a case of a mind not worried much about the difference between legend and hard evidence. He calls our author James of Varazze, but he corroborates our endeavor by calling *The Golden Legend* "one of the most widely known works of the later Middle Ages" (355). Murray used the 1850 edition. On 347, Murray shows how Macrobius's name became attached to Herod's death.

agrees with the second one offered, in this case the last lines of the chapter. Herod would not ordinarily figure as an entry in a collection of saints' lives. Jacopo conceived of the past as an uninterrupted story that did not fall on the predictable lines of a calendric chronology. It was essential to mention Herod in the story of the Innocents. But Jacopo did not need to provide all the details on his family troubles and death. That the killer killed himself was a just result Jacopo would not overlook. The feast of the Innocents was no place for a discourse on suicide, but we are forewarned to keep in mind that other famous self-murderer—Judas—to understand how Jacopo will work him and this theme into his book.

The Circumcision

This feast on January 1 was exactly the kind of topic Jacopo would dig into and make his own.³⁷ Two themes inevitably surfaced: naming Jesus, and the circumcision itself. These events also brought Jacopo to express something about the Jews—a topic cropping up repeatedly across his writings. Any references to them will not be favorable. Finally, the relic of the foreskin, in some ways an embarrassing subject, required an explanation from Jacopo because the object was well known.

On one level the name was not an issue because it was common knowledge that Jesus meant “savior.” What mattered to Jacopo was the spiritual meaning of the name, and he devotes a lot of energy to this subject, possibly to depreciate the other issues. Here Jacopo found himself comfortably in a venerable tradition stretching back to Hilary of Poitiers. The spiritual meaning of the name involved Trinitarian issues, the name “Christians,” and hovering over all this the pervasive topic of sin. Naming always engaged Jacopo’s attention, maybe because he understood the thirteenth-century commonplace, recently restated by Thomas Aquinas, that giving a name was a powerful, meaningful event. Jacopo usually turned to standard works on etymologies when introducing a name, usually Uguccione da Pisa or the venerable authority Isidore of Seville. Part of the function of a book like this was to explain the meanings of names, especially those originating from Greek or Hebrew. Widespread views taught that the meaning of a name easily affected the person who bore it—in this case Jesus could have no other name. These considerations should alert us to the special attention Jacopo gives to holy people bearing his name, in English, James.

37. *LA*, 119–30.

Circumcision meant two things to Jacopo: the beginning of the shedding of blood, and the Pauline teaching on circumcision of the flesh and the mind. Implicit in Jacopo's presentation is the idea that the Jews, however innocently in this case, shed Jesus' blood, and they would continue to be responsible for this crime. This blame permeates everything Jacopo wrote about the Jews. The actual circumcision was something Jacopo would have little opportunity to learn about from any Jews in Liguria. Since Christians were not circumcised, Jacopo took the opportunity to make sure that his readers understood enough about this matter so that they could in turn preach on it. So Jacopo cites a Rabbi Moses (Maimonides), whom he calls "a great philosopher and theologian," as his authority for the timing of the circumcision—seven days from the birth.³⁸ Jacopo may not have believed that his readers knew their Old Testament well enough to learn about circumcision. Jacopo's positive use of Maimonides does not include mentioning that he was a Jew, though the title "rabbi" said enough. That the circumcision would not have taken place on the octave of Jesus' birth gives Jacopo the chance to explain the difference between the two measures of time.

More importantly, the subject of time provided Jacopo with an apt transition to a subject closer to his heart—chronology. Jacopo had many exegetical works and Augustine to posit the eight ages of the world, and his scheme is important given the many speculations, heretical and otherwise, in this century about the actual number of ages and which one contemporaries were living in. The ages were (1) Adam to Noah, (2) Noah to Abraham, (3) Abraham to Moses, (4) Moses to David, (5) David to Christ, (6) Christ to the end of the world, (7) the death of all, the end of life here, and (8) the general resurrection. Jacopo placed himself and everyone else in the sixth age, and he prudently offered no predictions about when the end of the world or the second appearance of Jesus was coming.³⁹ Presumably the last two ages would be very short compared to the others. His analysis of the last two ages depended

38. *LA*, 126; the editor thinks Jacopo learned about Jewish circumcision rites, especially that it should not occur eight days or more after birth and the reasons why, from a work by Maimonides, *Dux neutorum vel dubiorum*, a Latin manuscript in Paris. If so, this is another bit of evidence suggesting what some presume, that our Dominican preacher may have spent some time at the University of Paris. Jacopo cites this work only twice (and only this book by Maimonides); the second one appears in the chapter on the Ascension, see below. Maggioni has shown that Jacopo read this work (or an intermediary) after his first draft: *LA*, xxxiv.

39. Jacopo's ages, though the traditional eight in number, do not at all resemble the way Joachim of Fiore understood history or ages; see Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York, 1985), 148–54. The ages were bound to conclude in the heavenly Jerusalem, but Jacopo's sense of sacred chronology reflects no knowledge of Joachim, an author he does not cite and may never have read.

on Bernard. This chronological digression, if that is the appropriate term, led Jacopo to better ground in thinking about time rather than Jewish rituals.

For the subsequent history of the foreskin Jacopo relied on Bartholomew of Trent, whose own knowledge of the Roman missal and liturgical calendar were masterful. In this case we should start with him in order to see how Jacopo used this material. For Bartholomew the troubling issue was Jesus' Resurrection and the assumption that he would have been raised in the flesh entire, intact, uncircumcised. This is an interesting concern in an age where no Christian men were circumcised and where it was the exclusive preserve of Muslims and Jews. Bartholomew seems to believe that Jesus was in fact entirely resurrected, hence uncircumcised, but, as he says, by a mystery the foreskin is preserved to his day in the holy of holies in the Lateran in Rome, as it is said. In fact it is somehow also present at Santa Maria in Trastevere, where its office is celebrated. The story is that an angel brought the item to Charlemagne who donated it to the church of Santa Maria, and his son Charles the Bald also has some role in the gift, possibly to the Lateran. Bartholomew also mentions the problem of the umbilical cord (which Jacopo does not raise here) because of the vexed issue of possible relics of Jesus. (Neither irreverently mentioned his baby teeth.)

Jacopo quickly summarizes this story about the foreskin and mentions an inscription at the Lateran that claims the presence of the umbilical cord as well. He too seems to doubt the angel story but cannot deny and does not question the presence of these relics in Rome. Instead, he revealingly concludes this chapter with an original survey of pagan superstitions surrounding January 1. The calends of January and Janus receive attention, and he knows a sermon by Augustine on this subject. Jacopo's detachment from his milieu is revealed when he does not mention here any of the famous etymologies of *Ianua* (Genoa) connected to Janus. Pagans are a surprising ending to a chapter on the Circumcision. Jacopo deprecated this old New Year's Day and the pagan nonsense about it. His love of all things about the calendar may have dictated this choice, but maybe he thought that Roman ideas about both topics, the foreskin and Janus, had more in common than some might be prepared to admit. Above all, Jacopo was teaching his readers what was appropriate for Christians to celebrate about the New Year, and more importantly given its secular nature, what they should not do on January 1.

Epiphany

This feast, celebrated on January 6, gave Jacopo the opportunity to resume the Nativity story and explain some chronological issues about Jesus, since

no one has much to say about the next thirty years of his life.⁴⁰ Jacopo had many sources at his disposal, but he has radically reworked his main one, Bartholomew of Trent. The principal topic was the magi, and the tangled tradition about them allowed Jacopo to select the details he wanted to highlight to make the story his own. For this reason, rather than trying to trace the source of every fact, it is better for us to keep looking at his own focus in order to see how he thinks about the magi.

First, Jacopo gives the names of the magi in Hebrew, Greek, and the canonical Latin: Gaspere, Balthazar, and Melchior. He learnedly explores the various appearances of these magi in scripture, in our terms as magicians or the proverbial wise men, either for good or evil. Though he also calls them kings, he prefers magi. The story of their following the star, itself a subject of vast interest to authors like Augustine, Pope Leo I, Remigius of Auxerre, Gregory the Great, and of course the evangelist Matthew, brings up the reasons why they were on its trail, and Jacopo has four. The most revealing is that they knew scripture, specifically Numbers 24:17, so they understood the significance of the star from its first appearance. Their travels inevitably introduce Herod again, who learns about the significance of Bethlehem not from them, but from his priests and scribes. Jacopo is very interested in Herod, the villain of the piece.

The most important things about the magi are their gifts and how it happened that their bodies ended up in Cologne. Jacopo lists gold first and knows that this metal has real significance in the Bible, so he has a lot to say about it. He is very brief on frankincense and myrrh, possibly because he knew little about them, and whatever their utilities were, they could not match gold's. The main manuscript tradition of the *Legenda* concludes that the bones of the magi were once in a church in Milan, which now belongs to the Dominicans, but at present they rest in Cologne. One manuscript line notes that Empress Helena took these bones and moved them to Constantinople, and later a bishop of Milan moved them there, but when Emperor Henry took Milan he moved the relics to Cologne.⁴¹ Another manuscript line has Jacopo writing that Helena found the bones, they were moved to

40. *LA*, 131–40. He explains the word “epiphania” as deriving from the words *epi* for “above” and *phanos* for “appearance,” which he ties to the star above that the magi are following. The editor credits Uguccone da Pisa with this etymology. Bartholomew of Trent simply explained that *epiphania* meant *apparitio*, “appearance,” which he ties to the star: BdeT, 46. Jacopo is interested in the etymology of Greek words, even though he did not know the language.

41. *LA*, 140, for this and what follows.

Milan in the same way, and then they were taken by Emperor Frederick to Cologne on the Rhine, where the people honor them with great reverence and devotion. This is the correct story, but as usual Jacopo does not mention the date (1164) or the important archbishop of Cologne, Rainald of Dassel, to whom the relics were consigned. Bartholomew of Trent wrote more about the translation to Cologne but does not mention Helena, whom Jacopo mentions in several chapters and whose collecting habits were well known to him.⁴² These versions of the end of the story, not unusual in the manuscript tradition of this complicated text, suggest that Jacopo continued to work on the *Legenda* after the first redaction, adding details and correcting mistakes. He had an orderly and systematic mind, and a hatred of error. He was also not very interested in Europe north of the Alps.

The Conversion of St. Paul

All preachers understood that Paul was the model preacher, and Jacopo never missed the chance to make clear that this was his exemplary role. This brief chapter on this feast (January 25) is also important for what it reveals about Jacopo's interest in chronology and his use of sources.⁴³ Jacopo believes that this conversion occurred the same year as Christ's passion (March 25) and Stephen's stoning, which Paul helped to incite (August 3), and hence Paul on the Damascus road (January 25), just making it into the same year when something like Easter is New Year's Day, and therefore perhaps reflecting Jacopo's source here, Bartholomew of Trent. Yet Jacopo also saw there details on Paul: that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, born at Giscallo in the Galilee, and was a Roman citizen at Tarsus.⁴⁴ These facts did not matter to Jacopo in this context. What concerned him were the three (of course) reasons why Paul's conversion is celebrated more than those of the other saints. This is a good question. Acts 9, glosses on it, and works especially by Augustine help Jacopo to explain what happened on the Damascus Road, the point here.

These reasons are revealing. The first one is that Paul is an example of a great and guilty sinner who came to faith by grace. Implicit here is that the

42. BdeT, 46–48; for example, Bartholomew noted the gifts but has no details about them and has very little on the star, which interested Jacopo a great deal. For this fellow Dominican the church in Milan was also “ours.”

43. *LA*, 198–200.

44. BdeT, 65–67, here 65.

twelve apostles (with one notable exception) were basically decent people whom Jesus called. Certainly in his letters, well known to Jacopo, Paul stressed the reality of his unrighteousness and his low place among the apostles, and Jacopo is right to draw attention to the fact that very few saints started off as sinfully as Paul. Second, though Paul's persecution caused the church much sadness (compressed into less than a year in Jacopo's reckoning), it had great joy at his conversion. Jacopo sees this conversion as *the* decisive event of the earliest church. Third, the conversion was an amazing miracle accomplished by Christ; in Augustine's words, the lamb killed by wolves (another image of Jews here) made lambs from wolves.⁴⁵ Many saints had some sort of encounter with Jesus that put them on the road to sainthood, but what Paul experienced on the way to Damascus became the archetype for this type of calling. For Jacopo Paul's conversion wiped his slate clean, and perhaps this fact made him more secure in his own salvation. Jacopo ends this chapter with a brief notice of Paul's blindness, while Bartholomew went on to describe what happened to Paul when he got to Damascus. Jacopo has a later life for these details, so he keeps a sharp focus on the event. We should remember that the *Legenda* is primarily a collection of saints' lives, and here Jacopo is pausing, admittedly along with the liturgical calendar, to explain the conversion of arguably the most important saint in his world. Paul has a competitor here in Peter, and we have to keep in mind how Jacopo balances attention toward these two figures and what they mean to him. Paul is the model of the sinner/theologian. Peter will be something else.

Septuagesima

The calendar brings Jacopo to a series of markers important to his aim of helping to train priests: Septuagesima (about 70 days), Sexagesima (60 days), Quinquagesima (50 days), and the familiar Quadrigesima (40 days)—Lent. John of Belet is his main authority, and this makes sense because these days involve liturgical issues about the appropriate Sunday rites and themes.⁴⁶ Here Jacopo's experience as a preacher is clearly influencing what goes into the *Legenda* because he might easily have skipped these markers in the calendar, but instead he considers them all here and breaks the order of his book. For Jacopo in turn they note a time of straying (7th), widowhood (6th),

45. *LA*, 198.

46. *JdeB*, cap. 77–78, pp. 139–46, for all of them, on which Jacopo had written model sermons.

remission (5th), and penance (4th).⁴⁷ All these numbers gave Jacopo the opportunity to reflect on the coincidences he enjoyed, like seventy for the years of the Babylonian captivity, and chronology. In this chapter he reveals again almost in passing that his world was in the last age (the sixth), the one thousand years before its end (but no details on precisely where on this timeline). Although widowhood was Beleth's theme of the sixty days, Jacopo reworks this material to a more general discussion of the mystery of redemption. But he too knows this as a time of widowhood of the church and sadness for its absent spouse, Christ. (Women or real widows do not appear at all.) There will be appropriately five of these mysteries leading to redemption: the birth, Passion, descent into hell, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus. Hell rather than baptism is another sign of how fixated Jacopo was on Satan.

Jacopo explains that Lent begins liturgically on a Sunday, beginning the time of tribulation, but that strictly Quadragesima contains forty-two days. But if one subtracts the Sundays that leaves thirty-six days for abstinence (he does not say from what), neatly a tithing of the year, but four days before the Sunday are added to make forty, honoring Jesus' own fast.⁴⁸ He draws attention to the Wednesday starting Lent without attaching any significance to it here, or even naming it. Jacopo concludes his discussion of Lent by a long extract from John of Beleth for fasting at this time, and not after baptism, as was the case for Jesus.⁴⁹ In brief the first two of these reasons are to be like Jesus and like the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness and then in exile in Babylon. The third reason, however, is almost medical. Jacopo believes that this time (presumably spring) is one in which the *libido* is strongest, and therefore it is right to abstain from feeding the body, or fasting. (The context shows that he means here the desire for food, but that could be easily feeding the desire for other things, like sex.) Lastly, right after the fast Jacopo says people should receive the host. Just as the children of Israel ate lamb and bitter herbs, "we" should be penitent to show we are worthy of eating the lamb of life. Whenever Jacopo wishes to praise the ancient Jews he calls them "children of Israel," never Jews. "Hebrew" is a term he usually uses to label the language or a word.

47. *LA*, 219–29, for all of them.

48. *LA*, 227. John of Beleth has his own numerology to explain the forty days, but he takes the tithing to come from the Roman exaction of a tax for the tenth day and has the four days added to imitate Christ. *JdB*, cap. 78, p. 144. This is a nice example of how Jacopo imposes his own ideas upon received materials.

49. *LA*, 229; the editor credits *JdB*, cap. 78, for this material, but in fact it appears that this source may have inspired Jacopo, while the ideas and their expression are his own.

The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Candlemas)

Jacopo's long chapter on this feast shows him at his most creative on a subject, Mary, who always engaged him.⁵⁰ Many books have been written about Marian theology in the Middle Ages, and Jacopo's contribution to this literature merits notice.⁵¹ Our perspective is on how his mind works, and so what are most important are the issues on which Jacopo is his own authority, or where he goes in a different direction than his sources take.

For example, consider the literal question of the purification, the ritual forty days a woman must pass after giving birth in order to purify herself, an obligation Jacopo explicitly knows from Leviticus and implicitly knows applies to Mary because she was a Jew, though Jacopo will never call her that. What interests Jacopo is the tricky question: what is Mary being cleansed of? Mary had not become pregnant from physical seed, but from mystical (presumably pure) seed.⁵² Jacopo thinks it is blasphemous to think this is a regular purification for the ordinary reasons, and he has good arguments from Bernard to back him up on this—all emphasizing the virgin birth, the circumcision, and the remedies for sin. Above all Jacopo sees the Purification (which he does not doubt) as a sign of Mary's humility. The forty days also has its usual numerological significance, in this case also literally the time before Jesus himself could be taken to the Temple, and also the number of days it took inside a woman's body for the child in utero to organize itself and receive a soul, according to Jacopo forty days for a male child and eighty days for a girl.⁵³ After this period the soul most often was breathed into the child. (Is he alluding here to miscarriages in the earliest days of pregnancy, and alleviating the grief of the parents?) This number of days has only symbolic meaning in the context of the days a child spent *after* his birth before he could go to the Temple. Jacopo likes parallels because they confirm the rightness of an argument.

50. *LA*, 238–51; his main sources are Bartholomew of Trent, John of Belet, and many others, but as we will see he radically reworks them, making the subject and language his own.

51. For an introduction to this vast literature, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, 2009), noting the “immense influence” of the *LA* for the standard account of Mary (203).

52. *LA*, 239, citing Is. 43 (:24) on the seeds.

53. *LA*, 239: “XL diebus corpus masculi organizatur et perficitur et in XL die anima ut sepius inspiratur.” The only other author I could find who uses this phraseology is William Durant (1237–96), Jacopo's almost exact contemporary, in his *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* 7.7.7, Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed January 8, 2013, also checked against Cross Database. The question of when a soul entered a fetus is a vast and controversial subject. What is important here is the view Jacopo publicizes.

Bartholomew of Trent notes that the customary offering at the Temple was a pigeon and two doves (lambs were offered by the rich), which could be redeemed for five silver coins. The offering of a firstborn son to the Temple also took account of the lifelong service such a child owed it.⁵⁴ Jacopo is intensely interested in these birds (as he is in all animals) and has much to say about them, quoting verses of poetry about the cooing of pigeons and how doves take care of their chicks.⁵⁵ He also knows that these are offerings of poor people, but he does not mention the money substitution or the lambs of the rich, so he is obviously reworking this material according to his own interests.

Candlemas is an old name for this feast; the name derives from the traditional procession with candles. The fire, light, and wax of the candles offered any commentator the chance to extract spiritual meanings from these symbols, and Jacopo was no stranger to this activity. The timing of this feast derives from the period since the Nativity, but its proximity to an older holiday attracted comments that help us see Jacopo's sense of history. A twelfth-century liturgical work, the *Liber Quare*, noted a past custom of the Romans that February was consecrated to Februus, that is, to Pluto, and involved purifying the city and placing it in the hands of the gods.⁵⁶ Bartholomew of Trent writes that Candlemas and the custom of carrying candles was introduced because the Romans on the calends of February purified the city in honor of Februa, the mother of Mars, every fifth year, a period called the *lustrum*.⁵⁷ Jacopo takes up this issue in explaining why candles are associated with this feast, and he has four reasons. The first one was to remove an erroneous custom. Jacopo is using a fuller source than Bartholomew (Augustine, Innocent III?). A long time ago the Romans on the kalends of February in honor of Februa, the mother of Mars, who was the god of war, purified the city every five years with candles and torches so that they would triumph over their enemies.⁵⁸ The Romans also sacrificed to a Februus, Pluto, and other infernal

54. BdeT, 71–72, here 71.

55. *LA*, 244; the editor cites a Munich manuscript for these verses.

56. *Liber Quare*, ed. G. P. Götz (Turnhout, 1983), 60: "Consuetudo fuit olim, ut in Februario mense qui Februus erat consecratus id est Plutoni qui potens lustrationum credebatur Romana civitas lustraretur et cura diis manibus solverentur." This source credits Pope Sergius (687–701) with changing this purification to Mary. The *Liber Quare* is a Carolingian liturgical work Jacopo rarely cited and may never have directly used.

57. BdeT, 72: "quia Romani olim in kalendis Februarii ad honorem Februe matris Martis urbem lustrabant." No notice of Pope Sergius here; he says that Christians changed it for the better, to honor Mary the mother of God who purified the world every year.

58. *LA*, 246, for this and what follows.

gods, for the souls of their ancestors and relatives, and passed the night with candles and attendant torches. According to Pope Innocent, Roman women celebrated these days with candles according to the fables poets told. Jacopo then goes on to a long historical account of Proserpine and Pluto, which concludes with this remarkable observation: because this was a difficult custom to relinquish, gentiles who became Christians found it very hard to abandon these pagan festivities. Therefore Pope Sergius changed this event for the better by having Christians honor Mary.⁵⁹ Jacopo views this as allowing the solemnities to remain, but with another intention.

Jacopo studied the Roman church and its liturgical calendar, as well as the lives of the popes, enough to know who Sergius I was and when he reigned, in what for Jacopo was the remote past, but not the world of the church fathers or even Gregory the Great. He accepts without question that an old Roman festival was being celebrated for reasons that had nothing to do with any religion. Innocent III in one of his sermons on the Purification supplied more information on the “gentile” customs about February.⁶⁰ The pope identified Ceres as the mother of Proserpina, and he explains the transferring of the candle procession as a result of the “holy fathers” not wanting to entirely root out this pagan custom. Innocent saw that the pagan rite concerned Ceres, and that was the connection, perhaps fancifully, to *cereus*, “wax” and by extension “taper.” Jacopo skips over Ceres and instead has the relatives of Proserpina looking through the woods with torches and lights for the missing girl. He did not get this story from Innocent.

The kalends of February dictated the timing of any event, and the forty days from the birth of Jesus provided two possibilities: Mary’s Purification and Jesus at the Temple. The candles at night, the *luminaria* associated with the pagans, as well as the mother of Mars, seem to have tipped the balance in favor of a feast in honor of Mary on February 2. What is remarkable is that Jacopo does not seem to have a problem with this straightforward explanation of how a pagan festival was repurposed by Christians to have cheerful candles and a nighttime procession in order to make recent converts happy and comfortable. Innocent credited holy men of the past for the decision to keep the pagan custom alive, and he supplies no explicit motive. Implicitly he thinks that these predecessors intended to completely extirpate the pagan custom but held back from “entirely” doing so. Why would they do this?

59. *LA*, 246, the word for custom, festivity, and event is always *consuetudino*.

60. Innocent III, *Sermo XII in Purificatione Sanctae Mariae*, col. 510, for what follows: “Cum autem consuetudinem istam non possent penitus extirpare.” The pope also noted that the story had Ceres descending to the underworld at Etna, where a special ceremony was held that night.

Jacopo probably wondered as well. Innocent did not mention the role of Pope Sergius, even though he certainly knew Roman church liturgy even better than Jacopo, who saw the issue as putting an old, intractable custom to a better use. This is how he understands historical change, in this case the big question of the transformation of a pagan Roman Empire into a Christian one, with the attendant reforms in religion and rituals. Jacopo does not see the church as accommodating pagans or in any way compromising with their beliefs and practices. Instead he recognized that it was difficult for the generation that converted from pagan beliefs to Christian ones to relinquish these pagan customs.⁶¹ It was simply hard to break old habits, and sensible people accepted that fact, *in the past*. In Jacopo's time, none of this had anything to do with Christian concessions to any sort of paganism; the feast and its rituals now belonged to them. (He never applied this sort of reasoning to contemporary heretics.) For this reason Jacopo shows no sign of embarrassment about the lingering pagan practices now honoring Mary, and he certainly did not view them as any sort of compromise.

In the context of a long passage on Mary's humility, Jacopo states that the birth of her son also introduced the remedies for original sin.⁶² Given the structure of *The Golden Legend*, it is not obvious where Jacopo had the opportunity to insert this important theme. The feasts concerning the life of Jesus might seem more logical places, especially the Nativity. Original sin comes up here in a list of five remedies for this sin that had appeared over time. Following his authority Jacopo notes the earliest three: offerings, tithes, and burnt sacrifices, the first from Cain, the second from Abraham making an offering to Melchizedek (according to Augustine), and the third, sacrifices (and the shedding of blood) were both antidotes, as it were, to original sin. Jacopo has a lot more on this theme, especially the congenial custom of tithing in money, so vital to the operations of any ecclesiastical institution. Tithes too were an important subject with no obvious point of entry into *The Golden Legend*. While thinking about purity and Mary, Jacopo seems to have followed a train of thought to original sin—no big leap—and redemption, for which Mary was the vehicle and Christ the redeemer. The process of redemption was itself a long one in which Mary played no subsequent part. But her feasts provided logical places for Jacopo to put important topics

61. *LA*, 246, a remarkable comment: "Et quoniam difficile est consueta relinquere, christiani de gentibus ad fidem conversi difficile poterant relinquere huiusmodi consuetudines paganorum."

62. *LA*, 240–41; Jacopo is following Hugh of St. Victor for what follows, but the decision to introduce this subject here is his own.

that did not come up in any conventional way. The holy people of the Old Testament, like Abraham, were not saints and had no chapters in this book or sermons devoted to them in the collections. (Jacopo took no notice of the Eastern saints or the old Byzantine church of St. Moses in Venice.) That Jacopo did not want to overlook these important issues tells us something about the ambitious scope of his book. We shall be careful to look closely at the other three Marian feasts to see how he uses them to explain to priests how to organize parish life around them.

The Chair of St. Peter

This feast (February 22) concerns the chair, or by extension the episcopal authority Peter first exercised in Antioch.⁶³ But Jacopo's main task was to explain why this was a holy day. He has no interest in any actual chair in Rome, and he does not follow Bartholomew of Trent into an extended look at Acts and the earliest church in Antioch.⁶⁴ He does, however, pick up from John of Belet the topic of meals customarily offered by pagans in Antioch at the tombs of their ancestors, food demons ate at night and this somehow aided the souls of the deceased.⁶⁵ Christians naturally wanted to do away with this custom, and in this case they quickly did. This is an interesting parallel to the custom of the candlelight procession for Mary we have just considered. In this case Jacopo explains that the holy fathers wanted to thoroughly destroy the tradition, so they ordered the meals now to be in honor of the installation of Peter in Antioch.⁶⁶ (They did not abolish the meals, and Jacopo does not question this.) Jacopo says nothing about who ate these meals now, presumably the poor of Antioch or the faithful in general.

Besides Peter himself, and there will be other chapters to explore his life, the main topic of this chapter was the history of the tonsure and what tonsuring of the clergy means. Jacopo has a long list of authorities from Jerome and Augustine to Pseudo-Denis, Isidore of Seville, and Bernard on the status of the clergy and the symbolic meaning of the tonsure. Since Jacopo was himself a tonsured Dominican priest and he could tie this to Peter, Antioch, and shaved heads, he found a way to fit this topic into an entry that was thin at best. Shaving hair off the head also allowed for learned comments

63. *LA*, 270–76.

64. *BdeT*, 78–79.

65. *JdeB*, cap. 83, p. 151, but the editor identifies Jean de Mailly as his main source for the dialog among Jesus, Peter, and Theophilus.

66. *LA*, 275, with similar phraseology as before: “Sancti patres . . . penitus hoc extirpare.”

on Ezekiel and the Nazarenes. This attention to the tonsure here represents an original excursus by Jacopo and is a sign that the special status of the clergy and the signs pointing to this elevated status were never far from his thoughts, prompted in this case by Peter, his superior. Presumably nearly all of his readers were tonsured, but they may not have all understood the tradition.

The Annunciation

This Marian feast presented Jacopo with two parameters. By long tradition it occurred on March 25, nine months before the Nativity, and the angel Gabriel had to play a role. Since an evil angel had delivered what was really bad tidings to Eve, it seemed fitting to Jacopo that Gabriel brought such good news to Mary. Beyond the basic gospel story, Jacopo was free to elaborate his own ideas, and he does.⁶⁷ He assembled whatever scraps of information he could on the early lives of Mary and Joseph and weaves in related topics like why Zacharias lost the power of speech. The significance of the Annunciation was that Mary would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit, and Jacopo is curious about why it had to be the Holy Spirit. To understand the appeal of such a question is to understand how his scholastically trained mind worked, and also what sort of books he read to answer his query. He has four reasons, the first from reading the authority he calls the Master of Sentences, the great theologian of the previous century, Peter Lombard, who brought in God's love, as in John 3:16, and the Holy Spirit as the manifestation of that love.⁶⁸ The second reason Jacopo supplies is from Augustine and is that conceiving by the Holy Spirit could only be an act of grace. Third, from Ambrose, is that the conception had to be special in its operation, and clearly this was the way. Finally, Jacopo got from Hugh of St. Victor the idea that the motive for the conception had to be pure. Ordinarily this motive was the love of a man for a woman and the love of a woman for a man (a remarkably equitable idea). But for a virgin to conceive, she had to have a love for the Holy Spirit in her heart, and obviously Mary had this love. This is one style of originality in Jacopo's work. He has no fresh idea on the matter at hand, but he has read widely and is very good at synthesizing arguments. Conceiving by the Holy Spirit was an event he wanted to understand and then explain.

67. *LA*, 326–35.

68. *LA*, 330, for this and what follows.

Jacopo joins Bernard in drawing attention to the fact that Mary freely submitted, consented, to this pregnancy, which instantly occurred. In a century when legal and theological debates about what made a union or marriage were much in the air, Jacopo here clearly falls on the winning side that will conclude that consent (not sex) makes a marriage. He also values a woman's consent.

Nine distinguished Latin verses, which Jacopo says come from a certain man, bring his account of the Annunciation to a close (except for a few contemporary miracle stories that he usually appends to Marian chapters). The verses are from Bartholomew of Trent, who also attributes them to this anonymous person.⁶⁹ Jacopo ran out of his own ideas after considering the issue of consent. Since other feasts (Nativity, Epiphany, etc.) account for what little is securely known about Mary after her pregnancy, and since there are other chapters to delve deeper into angelology, he moved on.

The Passion (Good Friday)

This long chapter takes up all the expected themes (Calvary, the cross, the remission of sins) and is another masterpiece of originality and concision.⁷⁰ Jacopo augments his standard collection of authorities with the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, an extracanonical work rich in details found nowhere else. At the risk of oversimplifying Jacopo's project, we must focus on two aspects of this chapter, Jews and Pilate, where his thinking is on special display. Not Judas.

This Friday before the Resurrection was a welcome setting for Jacopo to expatiate on the Jews, and we are well prepared to expect that this will not be a good day for them. Some of the references are implicit, as for example where Jacopo observes, among his five reasons for the sadness of the day, the fact that Jesus was handed over by his friends, or those who should have been his friends, from his own *stirps*, clearly his fellow Jews. Part of the problem here for Jacopo is that this is as close as he gets to suggesting that Jesus could be called a Jew. He does not, for example, join Bartholomew of Trent in noting that the word for this day in Hebrew was *Parasceva*, a day to prepare for the Sabbath.⁷¹ Jacopo directly names Jews as those treating

69. BdeT, 90. The editor has no source for them, but Bartholomew does not claim them. Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed January 11, 2013, states that the same verses appear in a work by William Durant, and probably, in my view, derive from Bartholomew as well.

70. *LA*, 336–53.

71. BdeT, 99, a brief paragraph supplying Jacopo with nothing, not even the way the pope in Rome commemorates the day by carrying a cross through the city. Jacopo does mention the word at *LA*, 342, in the midst of borrowings from Bernard.

Jesus disrespectfully, especially in their mocking taunt that Jesus should come down from his cross.

But the real villain of the piece is Pilate (not Judas, who will appear in the chapter on his successor as apostle, Matthias). Jacopo has a long and fabulous account of Pilate's origins and early life.⁷² We learn the fanciful motive for Tiberius sending Pilate to Jerusalem: he needed medicine or a cure for a grave illness. After Pilate's brief appearance in the Bible, what interests Jacopo the most about him is his short medical encounter with Veronica's image of Christ, and his own grisly end. The chapter on Good Friday has morphed into a minibiography of Pilate. To make a long story short, Tiberius is furious at Pilate for having executed a man who might have been able to cure him of an illness, so Pilate was arrested and sent to Rome. Conveniently having the cloth on which Jesus had impressed his appearance with him, in the version of Pilate's death Jacopo favors, Pilate kills himself with a knife in prison in Rome.⁷³ The emperor considered this end to be most foul, so he ordered Pilate's body to be thrown in the Tiber. Because of certain bad effects from having this body in their river, the Romans recovered it and sent it to Vienne where it was thrown in the Rhone (this is all from Peter Comestor). Alexander Murray has carefully traced accounts of Pilate's alleged suicide from Eusebius to the *Long Legend* that Jacopo used and hence insured would have a long sequel.⁷⁴ Jacopo did, however, note another account of Pilate's end that he found in Peter Comestor, in which Tiberius simply exiled Pilate to Lyon, where he speedily died (not a suicide) in disgrace.⁷⁵ Jacopo as a good historian tries to reconcile these accounts by supposing that Pilate may have indeed been first exiled to Lyon, then recalled to Rome for the main account.⁷⁶ But Jacopo still has the problem of the suicide and the tradition that Pilate met his death by his own hand, and he concludes on that exact point.

Since Jacopo wanted *The Golden Legend* to include a long narrative on Pilate, who was no saint, he had no other place to insert it than Good Friday. The balance of an account of the Passion weighted in favor of Pilate's story

72. *LA*, 348–49; the editor has identified Jacopo's sources as an apocryphal *De ortu Pilatis* and Peter Comestor.

73. *LA*, 352; the phrase for suicide here is "se necavit."

74. Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 339–43.

75. *LA*, 353.

76. Jacques Berlioz has drawn attention to yet another version, from an exemplum of Stephen of Bourbon and hence possibly known to (and rejected by) Jacopo, in which Pilate was hung in Vienne and his body thrown in a well. See Jacques Berlioz, *Catastrophes naturelles et calamités au Moyen Age* (Florence, 1998) 159–81.

does not seem to bother Jacopo. Suicide was not the theme of choice here, for how can he have been willing to settle for just a sentence on Judas if that were the case?⁷⁷ Apart from his fateful appearance on Good Friday, the legend of Pilate, besides filling gaps in the context of the holy day, was most satisfying to Jacopo because Pilate got what he deserved. Even Tiberius emerges more positively from this story! Murray has detected in some of the earliest notices of Pilate a slight tradition of sympathy for him, on the grounds that he had a guilty conscience for his role in the Crucifixion.⁷⁸ Jacopo either did not know this tradition, or, more likely, he had no sympathy with it. The story needed a villain, and in this chapter, the Jews collectively came in for their share (according to Jacopo) of the blame, but hardly Judas, and not the unmentioned Caiaphas. Jacopo was a believer in personal responsibility.

The Resurrection (Easter)

This moveable feast marks the beginning of what Jacopo calls the time of reconciliation. This chapter is another original analysis, departing completely from Bartholomew of Trent and even from his own previous models for telling the story of a holy day.⁷⁹ This time he organizes the chapter by asking seven questions about the holiday. His answers to all these questions would take us far from our topic—his way of thinking—but these questions reveal what was on his mind, and the last one will repay attention. The questions are (1) why did Jesus spend three days and three [*sic*] nights in the tomb? (2) why did he not rise immediately? (3) how did he rise? (4) why didn't he wait to be resurrected with everyone else? (5) what was the benefit of Christ risen? (6) who saw him raised? (7) who was taken out of Limbo? The first six questions directly concern Jesus and the Resurrection; the last, the harrowing of hell. Jacopo's answers draw on the usual wide range of authorities, freshly reworked. A few points from the answers merit a brief word. Among the five reasons for why the Resurrection was not immediate, Jacopo reasonably asserts that it was to prove that Jesus was really dead. He was not raised with the others because it was undignified for his body to turn to dust in the

77. In fact we learn from the chapter on Matthias (*LA*, 280–81), where Judas receives considerable attention, that Jacopo favors the Acts account of his end, where Judas hangs himself (*laqueo se suspendit*) and his guts fall out. This hanging was appropriate, according to Jacopo, because he was a traitor (*proditor*).

78. Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 340, first noticed in Tertullian, but not a medieval theme.

79. *LA*, 355–67; he calls this feast the Resurrection of the Lord. BdeT, 100–101, calls it *Pascha*.

ground. He appeared to Mary Magdalene first, rather than his mother, because he needed a messenger. The *Gospel of Nicodemus* provided more details than the Bible, and Jacopo was happy to retell them.

But Jacopo knew he was basically on new ground when he thought about what Jesus did in hell, because scripture did not openly explain it.⁸⁰ He valued equally a sermon by Augustine and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* for their information, but he may have found much of this packaged for him in Jerome. But Jacopo was intrigued by hell and had much to say about it. The demons were terrified of Jesus because they had never seen anything like him in hell. The world, which they controlled, had never sent down anything like this. So they naturally wondered who he was. Besides, their captives, chained and punished, never had hope for release or reason for pride. So these cruel voices of hell asked their prince (you know who) for help. Instead, the chains (of the meritorious) were broken and innumerable of his holy people recognized that the Redeemer of the world had arrived to take them from hell to heaven. Besides some minor figures connected to Nicodemus, Jacopo specifically names Adam, Isaiah, Simeon, John the Baptist, and Seth, as well as all the patriarchs and prophets. (No women, since the judges are not mentioned, even Deborah.)

After some dialog between Satan and his minions about what they should do in the face of this challenge, the gates of hell open, an event David says he predicted. Jesus then rescued all the holy people and consigned them to the psychopomp and archangel Michael who was to safely convey them to paradise. These newcomers are surprised to see that Enoch and Elijah are already there, and they ask how this happened. They see another person marked with the signs of a crucifixion, and they learn about the fate of the good thief (elsewhere named as Dismas). He and some others now seem to serve as gatekeepers in paradise, allowing entry henceforth only to those under the sign of the cross.

Women had figured prominently in the Easter story, especially Mary Magdalene to whom the resurrected Jesus had first appeared. Since this Mary represented to Jacopo a great but repentant sinner, and one whom Jesus had greatly loved, there was no getting around this.⁸¹ Inventing or rephrasing clever remarks between the devil and his demons was acceptable; putting new words into the mouth of Jesus was something Jacopo never did. Within the bounds of the permissible Jacopo restated the Easter story in a way that

80. *LA*, 365–69, for what follows; this is the major section of the chapter.

81. *LA*, 362: “ardentius diligebat.” As in *SS*, 265r, Jacopo’s Mary, deriving from Gregory, is the good one.

emphasized the characters involved and not the place of the event—very little notice of the tomb, and none of Jerusalem at all. Besides the important good persons of Hebrew scripture, Jacopo used the word for “numberless” to describe the extent of the holy people from the past in paradise, after a season in hell, because of Christ. This infinity of the saved shows Jacopo’s generosity of spirit when it came to saving *ancient Hebrews*. Following in the venerable footsteps of authorities such as Augustine and Jerome, he did not shy away from using a suspect source like the *Gospel of Nicodemus* to supply details frustratingly omitted from the canonical Gospels. Whatever had convinced the holy fathers of the early church to exclude Nicodemus from the Bible, and Jacopo nowhere disagrees with this, matters of reasonable (to him) fact deriving from this text were salvageable in a good cause.

The Discovery of the Holy Cross

The core of this holiday (May 3) concerns the “discovery” of the True Cross in Jerusalem by Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor. Bartholomew of Trent focuses narrowly on Helena and the literal point of the cross, its wood.⁸² John of Belet also has a lot on Helena, but nothing on Constantine, yet has a long (irrelevant and erroneous) fable about the career of Julian the Apostate.⁸³ Jacopo has a longer historical frame for the history of the cross’s wood, tracing it back to Seth removing it from the terrestrial paradise.⁸⁴ Jacopo also knows the story that the cross consisted of four types of wood: palm, cedar, cypress, and olive.⁸⁵ His interest in the cross curiously has not a word on more recent events, especially the reappearance of the cross in the crusader Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and its subsequent loss to the Muslims at the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Jacopo certainly knew these events, and his reasons for omitting them are unfathomable. What is worth noting here is Jacopo’s choice to use this chapter as the place to account for the conversion and later baptism of Constantine. This story, well known, need not detain us except to note that (curiously) Constantine was not a saint, hence no feast day, hence no obvious reason to appear as a major topic in the *Legenda Aurea*. Jacopo has structured

82. BdeT, 113–14.

83. JdeB, cap. 125, pp. 239–41; in this nothing on the wood.

84. LA, 459–70, a long chapter, beginning with the death of Adam.

85. Sicard of Cremona also knew the four types of wood, but he is not a source for Jacopo here; he noted that Pilate had added the notice on a board to the cross: *Mitralis de officiis*, 490. Jacopo had long been interested in the types of wood; see SD, 56r, third Sunday after Epiphany.

his book as a historical encyclopedia that cannot, because of the frame of the liturgical calendar, proceed chronologically. Yet somehow (perhaps by an outline) he was keeping track of major events in church history that needed to be inserted somewhere. An entry on Pope Sylvester gave Jacopo the place to include an even longer account of Constantine's being cured of leprosy(?) by this pope.⁸⁶ The emperor's biography hence appeared in installments, as relevant to the saint or holy day at hand.

The Greater and Lesser Litanies

The first litany was celebrated on April 25, coincidentally the feast of St. Mark in the liturgical calendar; the second is a moveable feast on the three days preceding Ascension, on a Thursday (see below). Jacopo uses this chapter to explain what the Greater and Lesser Litanies are, and since he knows the word means "supplication," he is very interested in the special objects of these prayers.⁸⁷ Bartholomew of Trent wrote that the litanies, instituted by Pope Gregory and Bishop Mamertus of Vienne respectively, had been against plagues.⁸⁸ John of Beletk knew a great deal about these feasts, especially stories about Pope Gregory appearing in Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* (more below).⁸⁹ From these works and the processions of his own time, Jacopo uses this chapter to explore the topic of supplications surrounding natural disasters.

Jacopo shows throughout his works a close attention to diseases. He locates the origins of this ritual in the time of Pope Gregory the Great, when there was a great and very grave illness (*morbis*). With unusual precision, Jacopo writes that he learned about this plague (*pestis*) in a biography of St. Gregory. In Rome this illness rose in the spring around Easter, and this conforms to the pattern of seasonal outbreaks of bubonic plague.⁹⁰ Among the many details about the rituals and processions is that the clergy wore black vestments and carried black crosses as (color symbolism) signs of penance.⁹¹ Mass processions in times of natural disaster were common across Europe and would

86. *LA*, 109–19, for December 31.

87. *LA*, 473–79.

88. *BdeT*, 102, very brief; the minor one was confirmed by Pope Leo IV.

89. *JdeB*, cap. 122, pp. 232–37, a long notice appropriately in a work primarily concerned with liturgy, but he was also interested in natural disasters.

90. Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe* (London, 2002), 155–59; in southern Europe plague was worst in summer and began in May.

91. *LA*, 474.

become even more important in the century after Jacopo experiencing the recurrence of bubonic plague.⁹² Yet Jacopo does not follow the long story from Beleth that begins with the first disaster for Rome, the flooding of the Tiber. Liguria, with only very minor rivers and no natural lakes, experienced sudden flooding as a result of storms and sudden heavy rain pouring down on the coast, as on October 8, 1278, during Jacopo's lifetime, if after the first redaction of his book. Storms, earthquakes, and disease seem to have been the major problems in his world, as well as the occasional food shortage and prodigious eclipse.

Jacopo relates that the Lesser Litanies (in fact the older ritual) was instituted by Mamertus, bishop of Vienne, in the year 458, called in this case "minor" because a bishop rather than a pope inaugurated the rite, but also because the place and the *morbus* were also lesser.⁹³ In this case *morbus* was either a revealing slip or a generic word for calamity, because Jacopo knew that the northern litany responded to terrible earthquakes afflicting Vienne. Italy was certainly no stranger to earthquakes in any period. But there may be a significant difference between these two types of disasters. An earthquake, however destructive or followed by aftershocks, was a problem for a few moments, while a disease plagued a city or a region for months. An enduring problem gave the local clergy and peoples a chance to organize a procession and if necessary carry out more than one. No one could reliably predict earthquakes (then and now). But spring was often a time when an epidemic struck, so annual supplications against outbreaks seemed prudent. Certainly Jacopo thought so.

Jacopo had a professional interest in fasts, processions, and intercessory prayers (rogations). He has four general reasons for such observances: the ending of wars, to foster material prosperity, to avoid death, and especially through fasts to receive the Holy Spirit.⁹⁴ He goes on to cite Master William of Auxerre for two other reasons, and before we get to them we should note that in Jacopo's way of writing he is claiming these four points for his own. By putting wars first as the most common type of disaster (natural or otherwise) for the people of Liguria, he was simply stating a commonplace that would have obtained general assent. And yet the Genoese were hardly a peaceful people and usually processed to end the blows of

92. On these responses to natural disasters of all kinds in Genoa, see Epstein, *Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 148–84.

93. *LA*, 474; likely sources are Beleth and possibly Gregory of Tours, whose works Jacopo knew.

94. *LA*, 475; I read the second phrase, "ut teneros adhuc fructus conservando multiplicet," as in brief "prosperity."

Nature and not the Pisans or Venetians, for example. Now William's reasons were more elevated: first, Christ himself (John 16:24) had encouraged the faithful to petition in prayer, and second, the prayers of the church fly to heaven.⁹⁵ Jacopo added these two to his list because they strengthened his case. Finally, the processions as parades engaged Jacopo; he describes the cross, bells, banners. The patronage of all the saints is prayed for, and in some churches a dragon with a great tail is carried, presumably an image on a banner.⁹⁶ Jacopo has a lot to say about these images and banners (*vexilla*), and he cites John Chrysostom that demons fear the sign of the Lord as a cudgel that beats them.⁹⁷ For this reason, and here Jacopo is speaking for himself, some churches take crosses outside to combat storms, in the same way as they can be used to fight demons. Jacopo's readers, often responsible for organizing prayers and processions in their parishes, would have carried their own crosses. Jacopo wants them to understand they are part of a long tradition. This is exactly why the Genoese brought crosses and a special relic (more below) to the harbor during storms.

Ascension

This feast, forty days after Easter, gave Jacopo the opportunity for a long, very original, and quite learned chapter on a subject he knew well.⁹⁸ In close parallel to his chapter on Easter, Jacopo organizes this one along seven big questions, subdivided with many minor ones. The main questions are (1) from where did Jesus ascend to heaven? (2) why did he wait so many days before ascending? (3) how far did he rise? (4) what did he rise with? (5) with what merit? (6) where precisely did he go? (7) how did he ascend? These questions may anticipate clerical queries and lay people's

95. *LA*, 475; there is an extended metaphor here about birds and flying, which someone (William or Jacopo) is tying to the fact that meat-eating birds, like ostriches (*struthio*), cannot really fly well, and this is a sign that fasting makes prayer stronger. This is a piece of ancient lore since people in thirteenth-century Europe did not know these birds. Why Jacopo did not mention a more familiar bird like a hawk is a puzzle.

96. *LA*, 476.

97. Sometimes Jacopo's quotations from Chrysostom come from an intermediary source, as Maggioni showed for two in the entry on Epiphany, also in the *Catena Aurea* of Aquinas: *LA2*, 156–57. *Ibid.*, 1076, the mist of attributions becomes more complicated, as an apparent reference to Aquinas also appears in Jean de Mailly and John of Beleth. None of the references to the *Summa Theologica* hold up, nor does the one to Albertus Magnus on 160.

98. *LA*, 480–92; Bartholomew of Trent is quite brief, and Jacopo did not need any of this material: BdeT, 102.

practical curiosity about the mysteries of the Ascension. Jacopo deploys a wide reading to answer these questions; clearly everyone was competent to speculate where the Bible offered no evidence. For example, Jacopo takes a commonsense approach to the second question about why Jesus did not ascend at once after his death. First, he supposes that it was harder to prove the Ascension than the Resurrection, so the former needed forty days for preparation and the latter only three.⁹⁹ Forty was also a number rich in spiritual symbolism. Yet Jacopo was not interested in the number of people to whom Jesus appeared (in the thousands); all he seems to care about is the apostles. Second, Jesus wanted to console the apostles, and this took time. Third, there was a mystical significance to this interval. This is a matter of measuring time, and the amount of consolation needed. As can be seen in this example, most of the questions about the Ascension lent themselves to simple answers drawing on wider biblical truths, so Jacopo simply had to stay within the bounds of orthodoxy and authorities, a place he was usually comfortable.

At first glance it might seem unimportant how far Jesus ascended, but in fact this is one of the longest answers so it repays attention if we are to get the measure of Jacopo's thinking.¹⁰⁰ He was surely interested in heaven and how to get there. Hence it was vital to know the length of the journey. Amidst a great deal of learned discourse about the previous trips of Enoch and Elijah and other topics, Jacopo points out that Jesus had to ascend very quickly because of the distance involved. How far was it? Jacopo cites for the second (and last) time the great philosopher Rabbi Moses (Maimonides) that each circle of the skies (heavens) for each planet is an ordinary journey of five hundred years, and they are separated by a similar distance. Since there are seven heavens, from the center of the earth (*a centro terre*) to the outer edge of the circle of Saturn, the entire distance is seven thousand years' travel, and seven hundred more to the very top.¹⁰¹ If this journey of 7,700 years was laid out on a flat path, and if anyone lived long enough to travel 7,700 years, since there are 365 days in a year and in each day a person could travel forty *miliarii* (Roman miles) and each mile consists of two thousand paces, the entire distance Jesus traveled (sensibly uncalculated by Jacopo) was over a hundred million Roman miles. After following Maimonides this far, Jacopo is content

99. *LA*, 481, for this and what follows. He relies on a sermon of Pope Leo for the first, but the other two seem original.

100. *LA*, 482–84, for this and what follows.

101. See William Granger Ryan's interpretation and translation, Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (Princeton, 1993), 1:293.

to call the entire trip a big leap (*magnus saltus*) from the earth to heaven. This almost unimaginably large distance, ascended in a moment, shows us how Jacopo used the ancient astronomy of Ptolemy, as analyzed by a Jewish sage of the previous century, to explain an event, the Ascension, not on the minds of these authorities. His cosmos was vast (unlike Dante's) and geocentric.

Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)

This moveable feast took place fifty days after Easter (the traditional benchmark).¹⁰² The Holy Spirit was a very important theological subject, and this time Jacopo has eight simple questions: (1) who sent it? (2) how many ways was it sent? (3) when? (4) how many times? (5) how? (6) who received it? (7) why? (8) for what reason was it sent? His answer to the third is learned and possibly the most unusual.¹⁰³

On one level the answer was simply the fifty days from the Resurrection, but Jacopo would not be content to be so superficial. He wants to explore how the Holy Spirit perfected the law and gave eternal reward and the remission of sin. The number fifty must be important here. The perfecting of the law took place on the fiftieth day after the lamb (and the law) was burnt. Just as the law on Mount Sinai (Jacopo was aware of the ancient Hebrew Feast of the Tabernacles) and the Holy Spirit on Mount Zion, fifty was the number to notice. The Holy Spirit paid the penny for the eternal remission of sins on the fiftieth day. Finally, concerning the remission of sin, Jacopo is interested in the indulgence (*indulgentia*) associated with the Jubilee that remitted sins. (He was writing before the first “modern” jubilee in Rome in 1300.) Many biblical citations from the New Testament support his view that the remission of our debts and trespasses is not only what Hebrew scripture had described, but here most crucially the remission and conquest of sin and death itself.

This small example shows that when Jacopo started thinking about any number he was able to draw out as much significance as possible from it. Jacopo's broader thoughts on the Holy Spirit take him through, or past, a

102. *LA*, 493–508, one of the longest chapters. Only *BdeT*, 103, very brief, explains that Pentecost comes from the Greek for “fifty,” and Beleth is most interested in the significance of the number fifty, especially in the Hebrew tradition (the fifty years of the Jubilee, the fiftieth Psalm), and his focus is on the liturgy for the Sunday of Pentecost: *JdeB*, cap. 132, pp. 250–51.

103. *LA*, 498–99, for this and what follows. The editor identifies the *Mitralis* of Sicard of Cremona as his main source here, but again, it is Jacopo's choice to insert and rephrase these thoughts.

number of religious themes necessarily detached from the ordinary realities of this fallen world. The Holy Spirit is as mystical a subject as Jacopo explores. Without taking the time to prove this claim, let me simply say that Jacopo did not have a gift for making mystical thought interesting, and perhaps it did not form the basis of his own spiritual practice as much as the concrete events of Christianity's history and the ecclesiastical rites of his present. In other words, a person with a firsthand mystical experience may be good at describing it, but it is very hard for a person without such an experience to make the mystical experiences of others seem compelling.

St. Peter in Chains

This feast (August 1) commemorated Peter's miraculous escape, through the breaking of his chains, from the prison of Herod Agrippa, and hence it makes a good counterpoint to the mystical Pentecost discussed above.¹⁰⁴ Breaking a chain is a concrete event that can leave behind physical evidence (the chains). This chapter provides another chance, after Peter's chair, to make a point about his life, and this time, based on a brief account in Acts, the liberation of Peter means escape.

First, Jacopo relates the story of Herod Agrippa's miserable end, specifically citing the nineteenth book of the *Antiquities* of Josephus, to show how Peter's tyrannical captor got what he deserved. Next, Jacopo inserts a long miracle story from Bartholomew of Trent about the early church in Rome.¹⁰⁵ Since Bartholomew has little more on Peter or the chains, Jacopo was on his own and found five more stories to relate: (1) the significance of the first of August, (2) how the chains got from Jerusalem to Rome in the fifth century, (3) in 964 a miracle of the chain, (4) a strange synthesis of stories about a dragon in Epirus and the devil in the guise of Moses leading the Jews of Crete to drown in the sea, and (5) a recent miracle in a monastery in Cologne. These vignettes do not appear in chronological order, and they cross the map of Europe.

Given the heterogeneous nature of these pieces of the narrative, in order to see Jacopo's sense of history we must keep in mind his overarching theme. He had an orderly but not necessarily linear mind. For example, he takes from Bede a long account of the quarrels between Antony and

104. *LA*, 701–9.

105. *BdeT*, 201–2, deriving from Roman sources and its missal.

Octavian, leading to the Battle of Actium on August 1.¹⁰⁶ It is hard to see at first glance what the division of the empire or Antony's repudiation of his wife has to do with Peter's chains. Jacopo's point is to explain how the sixth month came to be known as August, and why the first of the month remained a solemn Roman holiday into the time of the (Christian) emperor Theodosius, whose reign began in the year 426 (another of Jacopo's rare dates). The next story, concerning the emperor's daughter Eudoxia who acquired the chains for Rome at some cost from a Jew, explains how Pope Pelagius, fortified by this new relic, convinced the Roman people to give up a holiday honoring the memory of a prince of the pagans and instead remember the prince of the apostles. The pope was also able to produce a chain that had held Peter in the time of Nero. Since this fifth-century Rome had long been Christian, the story here relates an official desire to abolish a by now ancient and meaningless Roman holiday and replace it with a worthy Christian one. This is not an overt effort to encourage conversions or redirect any specific ceremony, as in the case of Candlemas. Yet even Jacopo is telling his readers (and us) a lot more about Augustus than we strictly need to know, so strong did a link to Rome's past remain. Eudoxia is responsible for the August 1 feast of Peter, for she was the one who witnessed the festivities about Actium on that day and wanted to revoke that tradition. This is as good an explanation *for the date* as any, since no tradition apparently preserved a record of *the* day the miraculous escape recorded in Acts occurred.

A well-known church in Rome possessed all the chains in Jacopo's day, and this feast was celebrated across Christendom. His sense of history was a kind of timeless fabric in which on the one hand various anecdotes come together, like a chain, but on the other hand in an order reflecting how they came up in Jacopo's mind, not according to a timeline. A sense of the past certainly existed in Jacopo's mind, and its main utility in this case was to explain why things were they way they are *now*: why August 1? how did the Jerusalem chain get to Rome? Even the digressions, like the end of the Roman Republic, help explain how a current Christian month got its name, though here Jacopo does not seem bothered that the pagan name endured into the thirteenth Christian century.

106. *LA*, 704–5, a homily of Bede cited. Jacopo also writes that the same basic story appears in Sigebert of Gembloux.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The chapter on this feast (August 15) gave Jacopo the same chance as his numerous authorities here to explain what happened to Mary after her last appearance in the New Testament until what people believed was her bodily transfer to heaven after the end of her life.¹⁰⁷ In this case Bartholomew of Trent has what was for him an exceptionally long chapter, and it forms the basis for much of Jacopo's suitably expanded entry.¹⁰⁸ All this confirms what we already know: Marian devotion was doing quite well in the thirteenth century.

Since so much of this chapter is derivative, there is a chance here to learn something about how Jacopo thinks from what he omits. Bartholomew tells this story about Pope Innocent IV (1243–54). On the first day of his election, he fell gravely ill with a fever.¹⁰⁹ His doctors despaired, and in his agony terrible horsemen appeared, saying they were henchmen (*stipendarios*) of the devil. These men claimed they had been paid to kill him, but one of their number doubted the wisdom of doing this, and another seemed willing to let the pope take communion and confess first. At this point a voice from heaven proclaimed that Mary had ordered that Innocent be cured, “and I gave thanks.” (Much of the story appears in the first person, as if told by the pope.) The previous miracle took place at a church near Verona. The next one is a timeless story about two women in conflict and Mary's intervention, and the one after that concerns St. Dunstan of England.

Innocent IV came from the Fieschi family, old nobility as counts of Lavagna near Genoa, though tradition claimed he was born in the city. This family produced two popes as well as cardinals in the thirteenth century, all certainly well known to Jacopo since they were also prominent in the cathedral chapter of San Lorenzo. Innocent IV also was devoted to Mary, added a feast in her honor on the octave of her nativity, and was the first pope to formally recognize the Carmelite order specially in

107. *LA*, 779–810, one of the longest chapters, begins with notice of an apocryphal book by John about Mary, with an extensive list of subsequent authorities. For a close study of this chapter and its sources, see Barbara Fleith, “*De Assumptione Beate Virginis Marie: Quelques réflexions autour du compilateur Jacques de Voragine*,” in *De la sainteté à l'hagiographie: Genèse et usage de la Légende dorée*, ed. Barbara Fleith and Franco Morenzoni (Geneva, 2001), 41–73.

108. *BdeT*, 232–43, especially important for the shared miracles. His editor has identified a huge range of primary sources, 437–40. Jacopo seems mostly content to tag along on all this learning.

109. *BdeT*, 241; his editor identifies the source as a miracle collection by Bartholomew himself (440), and since the miracle can be dated to 1243, he may be the original source.

honor of Mary. Jacopo skipped over the impressive contemporary miracle concerning the most prominent Ligurian theologian, canon lawyer, and church official of the century. In fact he departed from Bartholomew's model and wrapped up his own chapter with an extended analysis of notices of Mary in the Bible, after miracle stories of his own, including one revelation to Elizabeth of Schönau (1129–65), a German Benedictine mystic.¹¹⁰

The thing to notice is that Jacopo cut a good story about a local figure and inserted one about a German holy woman that Bartholomew of Trent, always keen on northern European stories, did not include in his book. Explaining this curious outcome is highly speculative. Though Jacopo's family name was a toponymic deriving from Varazze on the Riviera Ponente (west of Genoa), he was probably born and educated in Genoa before he became the city's archbishop (after writing the *LA*).¹¹¹ He may not have cared much about the Riviera Levante (east of Genoa) where the Fieschi originated. As we will see shortly, if one knew nothing about Jacopo, one would find it almost impossible to tie him to Genoa, so seldom does he mention this, or indeed any other Italian city apart from Rome. He never mentions Varazze in the *Legenda Aurea*. As a member of the international Order of Preachers, Jacopo was not thinking locally, and he may have reasonably hoped, as indeed proved to be the case, that his work would find an audience across Europe. Bartholomew's book leaves no doubt he came from Trent and was interested in its local saints and churches. The next chapter to consider surprisingly offers another perspective on this problem of local references.

The Beheading of John the Baptist

This vivid event, commemorated on August 29, was discussed by many weighty authorities from the Bible, Jerome, and Augustine down to Bartholomew of Trent, whose own full account differs substantially from Jacopo's.¹¹² There are other feasts associated with the Baptist, notably his nativity, but his life and status as the patron saint of hermits are not the focus here. In Jacopo's time hermits were common in rugged Liguria, but eremitism and

110. *LA*, 787, a well-known story that also appears in Bartholomew's miracle collection, but not in his liturgical work that is the main source here.

111. Giovanni Monleone has demonstrated this in his *CG*, 1:1–9. See also chapter 5.

112. *LA*, 873–85; *BdeT*, 264–66, a substantial entry for him, but nothing about Genoa.

reclusion did not seem to engage him as styles of piety.¹¹³ For Jacopo this feast raised a characteristic concern about what mattered now—where were his bones and head? The two authors, possibly drawing on a common source like Peter Comestor, know that from the beginning there were separate traditions about what happened to the head and the body. Our focus is on the body, which both knew was buried near Sebaste in Palestine, and in the time of Julian the Apostate pagans broke into the tomb and scattered the bones. From this point we follow Jacopo, who has the longer account of their subsequent fate.¹¹⁴ Afterwards the faithful collected the bones, burned them to ashes, and scattered them across the fields, according to Comestor. However, a monk from Jerusalem collected some of these ashes/bones and brought them back to Jerusalem, and later they were sent to Alexandria to Theophilus who placed them in the Serapeum to purify the pagan temple. Now, however, they have been gathered in Genoa, as acknowledged by documents from Popes Alexander III and Innocent IV testifying to the truth of the matter. Many miracles result. Jacopo says nothing about how the bones got to Genoa except that they arrived by ship (a reasonable assumption in any case), but he does describe in detail how the Genoese use these relics to prevent their ships from being sunk by storms, how processions of them through the city ended a drought, and how they stopped a big fire in the city.¹¹⁵

At this point Jacopo returns to the thread of the story requiring him to supply background information on the career of Julian the Apostate. Again, it is as if he feels the obligation, having mentioned the emperor some paragraphs previously, to account for him now. The relics, as well as a green plate brought back from the First Crusade that the Genoese believed was the very platter on which the head of the Baptist had been presented (not mentioned in the *LA*), were the most venerable and powerful in the city. This did not guarantee that others would notice the Genoese connection; Bartholomew

113. They were certainly a fixture of his Liguria. For notices of hermits at Granarolo (1272), see ASG, CN, Cart. N. 79, 3r–4r; at Costa, 2v–3r; at Santa Tecla where the brother hermits had a church (1277), Cart. N. 37, 180v–181r; at San Marco de Ircolis (1276), Cart. N. 39, 168r–169r; at Acquasola (1287), Cart. N. 9 parte II, 27v, 28r. Notices of women recluses or hermits are hard to find in wills because of vague terminology, but in one notable instance Bonanato de Alba left his sister the substantial sum of L50 if she left the hermitage of Santa Savina, otherwise nothing: Cart. N. 79, 121r, April 28, 1274. For a good study of hermits, see Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950–1200* (Oxford, 2011).

114. *LA*, 877–78, for what follows including Genoa.

115. For more on these themes and processions of the bones in the city, see Epstein, *Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 173–75. We will look at how the bones arrived in Genoa when we consider Jacopo as a historian.

had not. Jacopo's authorities ended with the head in France in Carolingian times and a finger that ended up in a Lombard church. The only recent significance of the bones involves Genoa, but their presence in the city was a fact well known. Jacopo was not giving Genoa any special attention by noting it, and what he says only amounts to a few short paragraphs in a long chapter. A reader would not assume that he had any particular interest in this, or that he had seen the relics or any of the processions, which he certainly might have.¹¹⁶ Again, we see that Jacopo is not interested in the provincial outlook, or suggesting that he had such a mind.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The chapter on this feast (September 8) gives Jacopo a place to narrate the story of Mary's early life.¹¹⁷ The problem, which Jacopo seems to recognize, is the shortage of information from scripture, apart from the lengthy genealogies of Mary (and Joseph) that he includes in order to demonstrate descent from David. These family trees also explain how Mary and Elizabeth were related. Jerome had written a book on Mary's birth that supplied more details, but Maggioni rightly thinks Jacopo learned about this from extracts compiled by Vincent of Beauvais.¹¹⁸ But Jacopo's main task here was to fill in the obvious blanks up to the Annunciation. John of Belet has little to say about this feast. He mentions the family trees without providing details. Perhaps his most revealing comment is that this feast was not celebrated in the early church.¹¹⁹ This fact does not bother Jacopo. He does know, however, that the octave of Mary's birth was not celebrated until Pope Innocent IV, "by nation Genoese," and he has an account of how this happened (deriving from other works by Bartholomew of Trent).¹²⁰ Jacopo extends this chapter by adding a series of edifying miracle accounts from Bartholomew and other sources.

The concluding long excerpt from John Damascene in praise of the Virgin, itself probably copied from an intervening authority like Vincent, suggests padding. Jacopo is certainly enthusiastic about Mary, and he thought it appropriate that the church had solemnized only the nativities of Jesus, Mary, and John the Baptist, signifying spiritual births in glory,

116. Maggioni has no notice of Genoa at all in his notes on this; see *LA2*, 1568–71.

117. *LA*, 900–17, another immense chapter on Mary.

118. *LA*, 903, and also an apocryphal gospel by Matthew.

119. *JdeB*, cap. 149, pp. 288–89: "Hoc festum antiquitus non solebat fieri."

120. *LA*, 907, and involving the intentions of his predecessors Gregory IX and Celestine IV.

penitence, and water.¹²¹ This fact alone made the feast worth notice. The problem was, apart from the good intentions of the celebrants, what was there really to say about it? When faced with such a question, Jacopo usually had in mind the idea that numerous miracles justified sheer space in his book. The liturgical calendar required an entry, but the length here was Jacopo's choice. So too was what he believed was important for preachers to know: the holy day of Mary's birth deserved notice, at least to emphasize her ancestry.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

This feast (September 14) commemorated the triumphant recovery of the True Cross from the "pagan" Persians by Emperor Heraclius.¹²² This event, from the seventh century, was a great success for Christians. Yet Jacopo, living in the shadow of the loss of the cross not in 615 but in 1187, makes no reference whatsoever to that event or indeed anything about it subsequent to its recovery and return to Jerusalem, which was soon to become a Muslim city. Since this feast was about the recovery, it makes sense that Jacopo accentuated the positive. This remote event also gave him the chance to display his ability to think like a historian and synthesize a great deal of information from reputable authorities.

John of Beletth has a long entry on the cross's recovery, and he emphasized two themes that in turn influenced Jacopo: what happened to the wood, and a thread about the Jews.¹²³ Jacopo was not the first to think that the wood of the cross had been changed through its experience of the Crucifixion—now a wood, in other words, that bore strange fruit. Jacopo is not concerned about what process brought about this metamorphosis; he is interested in the results, literally for the cross in that it had changed from an instrument of punishment to concerns of emperors, and in spiritual terms from death to eternal life.

After sifting through the various accounts of the wars between the Byzantine emperor Heraclius and the Persian shah Chosroës, Jacopo starts to relate miracle stories about Jesus, often far removed from the cross *per se*.¹²⁴ The first miracle is about a Jew in Constantinople who, while visiting (for

121. *LA*, 907–8, possibly his own idea.

122. *LA*, 930–38.

123. *JdeB*, cap. 151, pp. 289–92, for him very long.

124. Sicard of Cremona has more details on the shah that do not appear here: *Mitralis de officiis*, 931.

some unknown but not good reason) the Church of Holy Wisdom, stabs an image of Jesus in the throat.¹²⁵ Splashed with blood, the Jew flees the church, is apprehended as a possible murderer, and has to confess the true facts to save himself (he also converts). Another story, this one from Beirut, concerns another miraculous image of Christ; this one seems an icon fixed to a wall. After it is pierced with a lance, it flows with water and blood, leading to the conversion of many Jews.¹²⁶ In this story the local bishop keeps some of the blood preserved in vials, and he learns the tradition that the picture was painted by Nicodemus. These events happened around 750 (when the city was in Muslim hands—not mentioned by Jacopo). He concludes with another story, this one about a cross that helps a Jew, mentioned by Gregory the Great, and greatly expanded here with a lively dispute with Satan that Jacopo borrows from *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*.¹²⁷

The distant (in time and place) nature of these last stories makes clear that Jacopo consciously avoids anything about the second recovery of the cross and its painful sequel. However obscure this event had become over the last century, Jacopo did not think his readers needed to be told or reminded of it. Some of these miracles would have fit as well, or better, in the chapter on the Passion and are part of the long and sorry story of Jewish-Christian interactions and the genre of Jews supposedly taking out their anger against Christians on their holy images (or the sacraments, or even their children). Jacopo was not well disposed toward the Jews and was not being kindly to them here by skipping the many more recent, notorious stories he had at his fingertips about their alleged misdeeds. His memory tends to focus on the second heroic period of sacred history, beginning with Constantine and ending at the time of Gregory the Great (and Heraclius) that witnessed the triumph of Christianity in the world as Jacopo knew it, the Roman world. The event bringing this era to a close, and one not finding a place in the Roman liturgical calendar, was of course the rise of Islam. Anyone from Liguria knew that Muslims had menaced their coasts and burned Genoa to the ground in the tenth century, and the city and its region had been involved in some way in every crusade to the East since the first. The city's prosperity derived at least in part from trade with Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East, especially Alexandria.

125. *LA*, 934; the editor says the story also appears in Vincent of Beauvais and Bartholomew's miracle stories.

126. *LA*, 934–35, same sources.

127. *LA*, 936–37, Jacopo's original contribution to the tradition.

The city's archives contained documents in Arabic, and Genoa had at least a few people who could read them (not Jacopo). All we can conclude here about how Jacopo thinks is that he does not care to think about the world of Islam. Jews were, in that dreadful phrase, "good to think with" precisely because they were almost entirely absent from Liguria, and elsewhere in Christian Europe their circumstances were generally deplorable. Jews were, in the thirteenth century, no threat to Jacopo's vision of the church or cross triumphant. Muslims were also not "good to think with," possibly because the continued existence of their powerful, expanding states in the eastern Mediterranean directly threatened Genoa and its prosperity, let alone Christendom.

All Saints

In Jacopo's chapter on this feast (November 1), this author of the biggest collection of saints' lives from the Middle Ages explains what he thinks about the cult of the saints, and by doing so he makes amends for all the saints left out of this or indeed any other collection.¹²⁸ John of Belet explained how an old feast of Mary for the martyrs on May 1 had been moved to November 1 and transformed.¹²⁹ He knew that the Romans had a temple where all the gods and idols were honored, called the Pantheon. Jacopo has even more on this theme, because he follows the history of the temple in Rome and knows that around 605 Emperor Phocas gave Pope Boniface this building, which, suitably purged of pagan symbols, became a church dedicated to Mary and all the martyrs, Santa Maria Rotonda. Jacopo credits a certain Pope Gregory with later moving the feast to November 1 because it was easier to feed the crowds on that day because of greater food supplies (presumably after the harvest).¹³⁰

This history is meaningful to Jacopo because it provides his first reason for the feast and by extension the cult of all the saints: the repurposing of a pagan temple. Jacopo grasps that in the earliest church the saints and the martyrs were the same group. The Pantheon was a pagan religious message to which Christians offered no compromise: the Pantheon had to be cleansed and its idols

128. *LA*, 1099–1112. Peter Brown's classic *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981) has greatly influenced my thinking, but Jacopo has a very different view of the early church and saints.

129. *JdB*, cap. 127, pp. 242–43; out of sequence here, this retired feast was discussed according to the calendar. His account of All Saints (302–3) is almost entirely about the liturgy on November 1.

130. *LA*, 1099–1101, for Jacopo's distinctive explanation of the holy day and the Pantheon. Bartholomew knew this was Pope Gregory IV (827–44): *BdT*, 243.

removed before it could become a church.¹³¹ There is some sort of thread connecting all the gods to all the saints at a common site, and Jacopo sees this as no coincidence, but a fitting sign of Providence working through sacred history.

Jacopo's second reason for All Saints is the previously missed opportunity to supplicate saints who were forgotten and had no day of their own. He also recognized that with the passage of time the number of saints had so increased that it is now almost infinite. Jerome supplied him with an old opinion that there was no day, except January 1, that had less than five thousand martyrs.¹³² Plainly no calendar could deal with these numbers. Jacopo has only a few saints (four) from his own century and did not record any contemporary martyr stories (apart from the spectacular death and subsequent miracles of St. Peter Martyr—more below), as for example the deaths of Franciscan friars in North Africa. He knew something had changed about martyrdom, persecution, and sainthood, but he did not address the problem here. What he did do was to turn to William of Auxerre (†1231) for six more reasons for this feast, all suitably theological. The piling on of authorities for even more reasons (John Damascene, Augustine, Chrysostom, Bernard, and others) leaves the impression that Jacopo had little original to say about the feast and that its existence needed defense. He must have been responding to some doubts or questions from his fellow priests.

John of Beletth hints at one problem when he mentions saints of the Old Testament like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Daniel, and others, as well as saints in Greece and Venice that have churches but were not on the western Catholic liturgical calendars.¹³³ Jacopo does not mention any of this, but some of his arguments may be a way to claim that all these “saints” were being honored by this feast so there was no problem. Bartholomew of Trent influenced Jacopo's account, but he has a distinctive argument about the Pantheon, concerning Cybele, whom he knew the pagans considered to be the mother of all their gods and who was worshipped in ancient Rome.¹³⁴ Jacopo also mentions this, but he does not seem comfortable with Bartholomew's parallel between Cybele and her children, and Mary and her children and her faithful—the saints.¹³⁵ Instead, Jacopo concludes with his original contribution to the

131. For a parallel story, see Anthony Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon: Classicism and Pilgrimage in Byzantine Athens* (Cambridge, 2009), a history unknown to Jacopo, but this temple to Athena also became a church dedicated to Mary.

132. *LA*, 1101, and for what follows on William of Auxerre.

133. *JdeB*, cap. 128, p. 244.

134. *BdeT*, 327–29.

135. *BdeT*, 329; not in Jacopo, nor does he mention purgatory in this chapter, though Bartholomew does.

subject: people should honor the saints because they are interceding now for our prayers, whose objects include the souls of those in purgatory. He knows very well the connection between this feast and the next.

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Dead (All Souls)

This last feast (November 2) has received attention from Jacques Le Goff in his book on purgatory.¹³⁶ Le Goff, however, had no alternative but to use the old edition of the *Legenda Aurea*, and he did no favors to Jacopo's potential readers by dismissing him as a mediocrity "who has at bottom no ideas of his own." Since Le Goff's subject was not Jacopo's mind we can dismiss these unhelpful remarks.¹³⁷ Bartholomew of Trent knew that the feast was mainly for the souls of the dead in purgatory, the only ones who could benefit from the acts of the living, but he opens the door to the hope that these commemorations can also benefit the living a little.¹³⁸ Jacopo's long essay on purgatory is in part a compilation of all the best authorities on the feast from St. Odilo of Cluny and Peter Damian down to Peter of Cluny and Peter the Chanter from the previous century.¹³⁹ Even Le Goff credits Jacopo with a good exposition of standard doctrine, which included in *The Golden Legend* meant that all these theologians would receive wider notice across Europe.

Since our focus is on Jacopo's mind, we need not repeat Le Goff's summary of the standard story except to note a few features that reveal the workings of Jacopo's mind. Jacopo suggests that in purgatory the souls of the deceased are punished by evil angels (demons) and not the good ones, who do not vex the good, while the bad ones punish the evil people and vex good ones.¹⁴⁰ Jacopo's image here is a congenial one resembling the best of the thirteenth-century communal world in Italy. The good angels are "brothers and fellow citizens" (*concives*) of the souls in purgatory and visit there to

136. Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1981), 321–24, but see note 18 above for a later, more positive, assessment.

137. *Ibid.*, 322. He seems to have read nothing else by Jacopo except the chapter on St. Patrick (which mentions the entrance to purgatory), not even the preceding chapter on All Saints for context. Inevitably my bias is in Jacopo's favor. To be fair, he seems to have changed his view by 2011, when he concluded his book on Jacopo by calling him an exceptional personality and one of the great spirits of his age: Le Goff, *A la recherche du temps sacré*, 262.

138. BdeT, 329–30, known to Jacopo but so short as to be of little use to him.

139. *LA*, 1113–29, a long chapter.

140. *LA*, 1116, *LA2*, 1250, apparently an original thought.

console them.¹⁴¹ These souls also benefit from knowing that the prayers of the living can benefit them, for the people in hell are well beyond such hope. Jacopo notes that most authorities place purgatory underground somewhere near hell, while others think it is somewhere in the air in the torrid zone (close to the equator?).¹⁴²

The living were able to offer four types of help to the dead: alms, the fasting of their relatives, prayers of the saints, and offerings to the clergy.¹⁴³ Jacopo adds to this (from William of Auxerre) that acts of penance by their friends are also beneficial, linking friends, blood relatives, and good angels as all on the side of those in purgatory. The indulgences of the church can also help the dead who are not past hope. It might not be clear at first glance how this could happen, but Jacopo has a neat example here, a valiant knight who, heeding the papal call to join what is now known as the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars of Languedoc, fought in the aid of his deceased father's soul, who appeared to his son to thank him for his release. This is a rare near contemporary notice, and an even rarer reference to any crusade, and this one not to the Holy Land.¹⁴⁴

Jacopo's main subject here is not purgatory per se but an extended scholastic argument for the efficacy of prayers for the dead in the middle place. Those in hell or heaven did not need them. Since Jacopo was a priest and a Dominican, he had a professional interest in making sure the laity accepted the value of intercessory prayers for the dead. Prayer, and not the place or location of the dead souls, was what mattered to him.

Thus far, half way through our analysis of the *Legenda Aurea*, we have some themes that Jacopo thought hard about and believed every preacher should know and understand. These themes in turn illuminate Jacopo's thinking. He had a sense of time incorporating a short and knowable chronology from Creation to his own thirteenth century, with a subsequent but presumably brief sequel to the end. This conception of human and sacred history informed his thinking about topics as diverse as the cult of the saints, natural disasters, the

141. Some versions of the Vulgate have *convives* at Eph. 2:19 where Paul tells the believers that they are fellow citizens with the heavenly host.

142. *LA*, 1116. He sensibly concludes it hardly matters. Dante favored his well-known Mount. I once heard a fanciful lecture by Robert S. Lopez in which he argued that Dante and others thought that purgatory was on the other side of the world, in China.

143. *LA*, 1123–24, for this and what follows, a list going back to at least Gregory the Great.

144. *LA*, 1124, the example from William of Auxerre, a contemporary closer to the scene of these events, but once again, it is Jacopo's choice to put this exemplum here for reasons of his own.

Jews, suicide, martyrdom, ancient Rome and the end of pagan rites, and family life, to name some of the subjects most interesting to him. Above all, we must be impressed with the vast subject Jacopo assigned to himself, presumably because Jacopo believed that he could write about the venerable sweep of the liturgical calendar in such depth. As a humble priest, Jacopo recognized his worthy predecessors in the genre, but he also had the confidence that he had something fresh to offer his readers. Before attempting to generalize about *The Golden Legend*, let us turn to another perspective on this work.

CHAPTER 3

Saintly People

Having looked at the feasts of the liturgical calendar for signs of how Jacopo's mind worked, it is time to explore the regular saints' lives of the *Legenda Aurea* for the same purpose. What we concluded about Jacopo's use of sources in the previous chapter still holds, with the reminder that for many of these entries Jacopo has a standard life of the subject he can draw upon, or rework, as it suited him. For this reason we do not need to attend as closely to his predecessors like Bartholomew of Trent or John of Belet. Although Jacopo certainly knew these works well, his plan was more ambitious and his chapters much longer. This design drew him back to common sources, most often a *Passion* of a martyr or the *Vita* of a saint. To some extent Jacopo's work in these chapters is the ordinary toil of an industrious compiler. Many of these lives, however, gave him ample scope for original thinking on some unexpected subjects like Emperor Trajan or slavery. Within the constraints of the calendar of holy days in memory of the saints, Jacopo was in control of everything he wrote about the saints, and he was also free, to a certain extent, to emphasize saints he believed were most worthy of notice. Hence we study his choices, or revealed preferences, for his view of the sacred world.

Since the previous chapter provides a sense of how Jacopo worked, this one can move more directly to the salient features of the lives. In other words, there is no need to summarize what are in some instances lengthy

chapters. Instead, we will focus on the distinctive and revealing aspects of Jacopo's work and his original contributions to standard narratives. The plan of this chapter is to look at some lives in the following way. First, the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then the quartet of Michael the Archangel, John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, and Paul to see what Jacopo makes of sacred history in the Bible and the early church. For these individuals Jacopo consistently saw himself as standing at the end of a millennium of tradition, so we should look for what is fresh in his writing. Next, three classic authorities for medieval Christianity—Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux—merit notice for how Jacopo sees the history of theological thought. Finally, four roughly contemporary thirteenth-century figures—Dominic (1170–1221), Francis (1182/83–1226), Peter Martyr (1206–52), and Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–31)—provide some insights on how Jacopo responded to the world in which he lived. This chapter concludes with a potpourri of ideas culled from the many lives not considered in the systematic ways of this and the previous chapters.

Matthew (September 21)

This life, like many others of famous persons in the Bible, picks up Matthew's story when he went (presumably after Pentecost) to Ethiopia to preach.¹ Jacopo did not embroider biblical accounts, and he rightly assumed that his predecessors had already distilled everything there was about people mentioned in the Bible. Jacopo revealed in a sermon that he was aware that the ancient pagans Porphyry and Emperor Julian had thought Matthew ignorant, but he rejects their opinions.² Jacopo relies on Jerome for a list of Matthew's four distinctive qualities, and the last one, as an evangelist, is most interesting. Jacopo departs from his sources to record that this evangelist's gospel, before all the others, is most frequently used in church, along with David's psalms and Paul's letters.³ Jacopo cites Matthew more than the other gospel writers, and a priest would certainly be an authority and a good witness for what parts of the Bible were most frequently recited in church. The question is, why Matthew? Jacopo knows he needs to answer this question here (the psalms and letters can be left to other entries). As Jacopo's editor Maggioni has shown, he turned to a

1. *LA*, 957–64.

2. *SS*, 358r; Jacopo was not, however, in a position to evaluate Matthew's Greek style.

3. *LA*, 962: "Eius enim evangelium pre ceteris evangelistis magis in ecclesia frequenter sicut et psalmi David et epistole Pauli."

general comment by the greatest authority and fellow Dominican of his age (and possibly his teacher), Thomas Aquinas, for a line of reasoning that is slightly off the theme. Jacopo picks up the distinction (without attribution) that there are three classes of sin, pride, lust, and avarice, and he has three figures embodying these faults: the proud Saul, the lustful David, and the avaricious Matthew. Jacopo liked the idea that Matthew, uniquely among the apostles, self-confessed to the sin of greed by calling himself a publican, a tax collector. Jacopo draws on relatively remote authorities, Isidore of Seville and Bede, to explain what tax collectors did, and he uses the inherited example of a port tax official. Such officials were a fixture of life on the docks of every port in Liguria, and Jacopo knows this. He does not understand what Matthew actually did for the Roman tax farmers, but he knows that Matthew was rightly not proud of it and is in fact portrayed, before his calling, as a sinner.

On one level we can see a type of reasoning here. Jacopo knows that Matthew is the preferred evangelist, and he shares this view. He has got hold of an idea that there are three key voices, this evangelist, David, and Paul, and he has a reliable authority (Aquinas) linking them to three big types of sins. Now we have to join him in the leap from the most proud King Saul to his namesake Saul of Tarsus who is Paul, who confessed to many sins, including pride. But the connection here seems tenuous, based as it is on the power of a name. (Perhaps Jacopo was wondering why anyone would name a child after Saul; no Christian in his time did.) Many great themes permeate David's psalms. But the crime Jacopo mentions, the murder of Uriah for David's lust for his wife, is not the reason why psalms are recited in church. Matthew's self-proclaimed status as a tax collector is Jacopo's subject here. Yet nothing in that fact would explicitly explain his popularity in church services, unless there is an implicit message in Matthew's gospel that would account for its widespread use as Jacopo describes it. If there is any truth to the idea that wealth has something to do with the reason for Matthew's popularity, then we might conclude that this gospel does indeed have more relevant messages on that topic for the peoples of one of the most economically advanced and commercialized regions of thirteenth-century Europe, and Jacopo's homeland as well. Our analysis of Jacopo's sermons has amply demonstrated his intense interest in greed. A crude reductionist argument about economics in the Bible is not the point. But we should remember that it is only Matthew who records twice (17:24–27 and 22:17–21) the famous notices of taxation, the tribute money, and rendering what is owed respectively to Caesar and to God. Jacopo, curiously, does not cite these passages

here, or indeed anywhere else in the *Legenda Aurea*. Reading into omissions or silences is a perilous venture. At least we can wonder: can Jacopo come up with no better explanation for Matthew's popularity than that Matthew was a confessed sinner? Perhaps Matthew's prominence simply resulted from his gospel being the first book of the New Testament. As a staunch supporter of the papacy in every instance, Jacopo was probably not eager to point out any sphere of life where what any Caesar (or Ghibelline in Genoa) wanted would prevail.

Lastly, Jacopo needs Bede as an authority that the Greek word *thelos* means *vectigal* (tax) in Latin. Greek is a mystery to him. Genoese sources rarely used this word for tax. Genoa relied mainly on excise taxes and monopoly rents, and in common with other European governments was experimenting with tax farming and inventing a public debt. No respectable voice would call these people publicans, or sinners.

Mark (April 25)

Mark is in Jacopo's work the least cited evangelist, but he does not draw attention to this fact. This chapter follows the standard pattern: in this case Peter sends Mark to Alexandria in Egypt, and he died there around the year 67 when Nero was emperor.⁴ This chapter contains a rare physical description of Mark; Jacopo ordinarily for whatever reason cannot provide a sense of a person's appearance. This passage suggests that if more such notices were available in his authorities, he would have been happy to include them. Jacopo relates that Mark had a long nose, separated eyebrows, beautiful eyes, a receding hairline with gray hair, and a big beard, and he was middle-aged.⁵ We will see in a moment why this description is especially relevant here.

Jacopo has a complex account of what happened to Mark's body after his death. He knows an old story that before Mark went to Egypt he had visited and preached in Aquilea in northern Italy near Venice, where he is honored to the present day.⁶ This connection helps to explain why in the time of Emperor Leo in the year 467, the Venetians moved his body to their city where they built the great church of San Marco to honor it. This long

4. *LA*, 399–410; the editor has here as the main source a sermon by Peter Damian and a *Passion* of Mark still in manuscript.

5. *LA*, 402; also some traits of character and temperament are mentioned. The rare word *recalvaster* for balding from the front is used. See below for a general appraisal of what physiognomy meant to Jacopo.

6. *LA*, 400.

narrative of Mark's translation puzzled Jacopo because some manuscripts of his work contain the better known, standard account of how in the year 823, when the Saracens ruled Egypt, intrepid Venetian merchants secretly smuggled Mark's body out of Alexandria and triumphantly brought it home to Venice.⁷ The second story is the one Jacopo favored, and it certainly reflected well on Genoa's main rival. Yet there were four evangelists, but only one John the Baptist, and he was, as we will see, in Genoa.

Jacopo knows posthumous miracle stories from written sources concerning Mark, but the final one is an event occurring in Pavia in 1241, which he did not witness himself but heard from the prior there whom he reports as the source of the account.⁸ At the Dominican convent in Pavia a Brother Julian, young in body but old in spirit, lay dying. While sleeping he had a last vision of Mark, who reclined beside him in bed. A voice (presumably God) asked Mark what he was doing there, and Mark said he was there to visit in his last hour someone who was especially devoted to him. Julian woke up, reported this dream or vision to the prior, and then died. Jacopo has this story at second hand, but he has no doubts as to its veracity. As a Dominican official in northern Italy, he was well positioned to know what was happening in Pavia, and the prior there, his subordinate, was an eyewitness to the deathbed scene. Since the story as related does not have Mark identifying himself, the implicit message is that the brother recognized him, perhaps from an image of a saint to whom he was very devoted. Jacopo may have included a physical description for us so that we may make sense of this identification and accept it. Mark's appearance was a miracle of comfort since it made Julian happy to go to the next life. No one was looking for or even wanting a cure here. Julian was eager to die and go to heaven. This story seems to be the closest experience Jacopo had of a genuinely miraculous or mystical spiritual encounter, not witnessing it at first hand, but hearing about it from a reliable witness. He shows a high standard of testing the story that came to his notice from Dominican to Dominican. Another story, for which Jacopo cites no source at all, concerns a terrible drought in Apulia that was ended by praying to Mark. Since this is the penultimate miracle, it too may have occurred in Jacopo's century and be the kind of miracle he found most credible in his own time. His stance toward miracles merits a book in its own right. What we value here is the process by which

7. See Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), 78–92, for a fine analysis of Mark's cult in medieval and Renaissance Venice.

8. *LA*, 409–10, for this and what follows.

he introduces himself as an authority for a miraculous event, which he took on reliable witness from another.⁹

Luke (October 18)

Jacopo's question about Luke concerns authority and witness.¹⁰ Apart from the Bible, there was little sure history about him. Jacopo knows that Luke never saw Jesus, and he sides with the main tradition that Luke was not one of the first seventy-two believers. One difficulty was that no one seemed to know anything certain about Luke outside the New Testament. One trail to follow was his body, and Bartholomew of Trent has the old account of Luke's translation to Constantinople and burial with the apostle Andrew.¹¹ But Jacopo decided to skip this path and instead filled out this chapter with some general treatments of other topics, like how the evangelists became associated with various symbolic creatures, in Luke's case a cow evoking the priesthood of Jesus. Luke also possessed admirable traits that anyone could find in his writings, which contain many important sayings of Jesus.

From the notices of Luke in scripture Jacopo extracts a few explicit facts; for example, Luke was a physician, but he is not very interested in this profession (as opposed to disease) and has nothing more to say about it. Jacopo finds in his sources the implicit fact that Luke was not married and he had no children. For Jacopo, in the same status, this was entirely admirable, and he knew well that not all the apostles were celibate or childless. Perhaps since Luke was not himself a preacher or in any way a member of a protoclergy but seems a thoroughly lay person, Jacopo does make too much of his private life and its virtues.

Jacopo somewhere learned about and approved of an observation by Augustine that two of the witnesses reported what they saw, Matthew and John, and two reported what they heard, Mark and Luke.¹² Since testimony from what one has seen is more firm and certain than what one has heard (hearsay, though Jacopo does not call it that), on a spectrum of reliability Jacopo places Matthew and John at one extreme (totally credible) and Mark and Luke in the middle, leaving the other end unmentioned. For Jacopo, Paul's association with Luke is a definite point in his favor, but there are certainly

9. Maggioni rightly emphasizes that this is the only time in this work Jacopo refers to himself. *LA2*, 1544.

10. *LA*, 1059–70.

11. *BdeT*, 318–20.

12. *LA*, 1070, *testes*.

some loose ends here. The other extreme, implausibility, might be occupied with completely unreliable sources, which Jacopo does not name, but which cannot logically include a work like Pseudo-Matthew or the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, extracanonical works cited by Jacopo as sources of reliable information. Works more unreliable than these were unmentionable. Even the middle is a problem, because Jacopo has opened up the question of whether or not some parts of the New Testament are more believable than others—a place he does not want to be. Perhaps in his own mind Jacopo was trying to justify the fact that his own use of the evangelists, as well as church rites, relied more heavily on John and Matthew. Jacopo valued the evidence of his own senses and was not able to put this view aside when reading scripture, or probably anything else. Yet he believed hearsay when he judged the original eyewitness credible.

Jacopo concludes the chapter on Luke with a story he says comes from the *Antiochene History*, presumably a book on crusader Antioch.¹³ When the Christians were in the city besieged by the Turks and suffering from famine, a spirit appeared in the church of St. Mary (Magdalene, probably) de Tripoli and identified himself as Luke, who had come to Antioch to remind the army that the heavenly hosts were on their side. This episode, comfortably located in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, came from the heroic age of crusading and did not draw Jacopo into relating more recent failures and lack of will.

John (December 27)

John's long life and many writings gave Jacopo the chance to find in all this material some themes especially engaging his interest.¹⁴ Venerable authorities had already produced biographies and other materials on John's life, and Bartholomew of Trent had extracted and commented on every biblical reference. Hence Jacopo followed the pattern set by the other chapters on the evangelists by picking up the postbiblical story. Traditional accounts held that John had lived into extreme old age, dying around the year 100 at the

13. Maggioni tracked down this citation to Stephen of Bourbon: *LA2*, 1677. Nothing like this appears in Walter the Chancellor's *Antiochene Wars*, trans. Thomas Asbridge and Susan Edgington (Aldershot, 1999). This story about Luke is a puzzle (though he may have been from Antioch) in this context because the saints most important at crusader Antioch were Peter, Andrew, and George; see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, 1994), 104–6. The *Chanson d'Antioche*, a long twelfth-century poem about the conquest of Antioch, mentions a vision in a church of St. Mary in Antioch, but Jesus, Mary, and Andrew appear, not Luke, who is mentioned nowhere in this text. *La Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. Jan Nelson (Tuscaloosa, 2003), 284–85.

14. *LA*, 87–96; as a student at St. John's College Cambridge, I became aware of much of this material.

age of ninety-nine.¹⁵ Jacopo was interested in this, as well as John's eastern connection to Patmos and Ephesus. Jacopo pays little attention to John as the author of Revelation; this perplexing book was not a favorite of his.

John's teaching gave Jacopo the occasion to explore six reasons why the evangelist condemned an immoderate appetite for riches. Wealth always engaged Jacopo, and on this topic he departs from his sources and contributes his own analysis of the problem of riches. As we have seen, Jacopo had thought hard about John's letters, and the theme of not being part of the world shaped his approach to life. Jacopo has six reasons for deprecating wealth.¹⁶ The story about Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham and the rich man burning in hell was the first. Jacopo made the second argument from nature, along the standard account (and one of his favorite biblical passages) that man entered the world naked and without riches and left it in the same state. The third argument was that the sun, moon, stars, rain, and air were benefits common to everyone and thus among people "everything ought to be in common for all," "inter homines omnibus omnia communia esse debent." The basic phrase *omnibus omnia communiter*, that everything should be held in common, was frequently used by many authors since Christianity's earliest days and probably derives from the passage in Acts (2:45—not cited here or anywhere in this book by Jacopo) about goods pooled together in the church of Jerusalem. It would also have a long sequel in later medieval Europe (in the debates about the Spiritual Franciscans), the Reformation (the Anabaptists), and modern history. For it to appear unvarnished in a chapter on John is surprising. Even in Jacopo's lifetime some Dominicans (but not apparently him) criticized what they perceived as an extreme renunciation of wealth by some of Francis's followers.

Jacopo derives his conclusion about common property from God's creation freely granted to all his people, and he does not qualify this expansive view by excluding (or explicitly including) other things like land, food, or money; he means everything. As a test of this conclusion we can note three previous authors who used a similar phrase but qualified it.¹⁷ Pseudo-Clement (before the fourth century) stated everything should be held in common by friends (perhaps implying all fellow Christians or some smaller fellowship

15. *LA*, 95, from Isidore's work on the origin and death of the fathers.

16. *LA*, 90–91, for this and what follows. Jacopo enters the contested terrain of the friars and wealth; for context, see Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1978), 146–69, and David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park, 2001), 43–65, for the rigorists in Jacopo's Italy.

17. For this, search of Brepols Library of Latin Literature, Series A, accessed January 26, 2013.

group); John of Salisbury (twelfth century) equated everything with goods (*bona*); Thomas Aquinas argued that the sacraments should be common to all. Jacopo did not hedge in or qualify his claim, though his understanding of “everything” seems to be material, implying that the existence of riches meant that some were poor. What good would this world be to the poor if all it had to offer them was air and water? Jacopo did not have a clear sense of property rights here; what he had in mind was the absence of an individual right and hence a common claim by all. How he squared this belief with the strong tradition of private property in Liguria is unclear at this point.

The fourth reason was *fortuna*—that a rich man was a slave to money and the devil, did not possess money but was instead ruled by it, and was under the power of the devil because according to scripture a lover of money is a slave to Mammon. This view, which has echoes in the Bible, was also old.¹⁸ Also, *fortuna* was not a Christian concept, and Jacopo was not going to allow chance or whim or a pagan goddess to play any role in how wealth ended up in some hands rather than others. Fortune was instead a devilish notion. Jacopo’s fifth argument was based on anxiety (*cura*), evoking the care and concern by day and night that the rich man spent on acquiring and safeguarding riches. Liguria certainly contained many such men, and Jacopo knew they worked hard for their money and were fearful of its loss. The fruits of their labors made Genoa one of the great cities of Europe, and Jacopo would not necessarily view them as sinners, provided they worked for the right reasons. (But it is hard to see how one of these reasons could be the hope for gain.) Lastly, Jacopo understood the losses or damages associated with wealth. In the first place acquiring wealth placed two evils on its possessor: a misplaced happiness now and eternal damnation in the future. Second, the loss of wealth (not distinguished here as voluntary or involuntary) granted two good things: grace in the present and eternal glory in the future. Jacopo found all this tied to John’s subsequent ministry, but the passion he brings to the subject was his own. If he had not identified so strongly with the Dominican order, one might assume he was a Franciscan rigorously committed to poverty. (It is also hard to put aside that he eventually became the archbishop of Genoa, living in a palace, because of these views on commerce, or despite them?)

But perhaps it is important here to note that Jacopo was not discussing poverty but riches. No doubt, as a man who preferred the Aristotelian mean in most things, his original point about an “immoderate” appetite for riches

18. A similar phrase appears in a work known as *The Virtues of the Apostles*, possibly from the sixth century: Brepols Library of Latin Literature, Series A, accessed January 25, 2013. Mammon frequently appeared in Jacopo’s sermons on demons and their specialties.

is the key to our understanding of his thought. Moderation was a problem, however, when applied to John's message, and Jacopo knew well enough that John's teachings were hardly moderate. Loving the world or its riches moderately was not what John recommended, or for that matter Francis of Assisi or Dominic. Jacopo knew that God loved the world, but ordinary people were not immune to the world's false values and hence could not be trusted to love it. Jacopo's corner of northwest Italy is a beautiful region, and one could love it as a part of Providence. Jacopo's Liguria was not a land blessed with many natural advantages, and its greatest resource may have indeed been the combative entrepreneurial spirit of its inhabitants, and their aptitude for hard and risky work overseas. Many foreigners did not love the Genoese, as Dante was soon to testify (*Inferno* 33:151). Jacopo was writing for his fellow clerics, but the people around him were never far from his thoughts, and he admired hard work for its own sake, perhaps as a means to glorify God, and not as a materialistic end for itself or a path to hell because of an immoderate love of gain.

Each of the evangelists gave Jacopo something to think about: Matthew as eyewitness, Mark's physical body after his death, Luke's secondary witness with its emphasis on hearing, especially Paul, and John and the word and the world. What was important to Jacopo about Matthew was Jesus calling a tax collector, a surprising choice to serve as the main witness to so much of what Jesus taught. Mark provided the occasion for one of Jacopo's rare personal reminiscences, and for details on a country important to Genoa's prosperity—Egypt. Luke, the childless bachelor and “our dearest physician,” was the educated collector of stories read and heard, perhaps the closest model for Jacopo's own career as a writer. John's youthful conversion and long life showed Jacopo what a man could achieve over sixty-seven years of ministry, a span he might hope to match (but would not). These were not implausible inferences from their reputations; Michael was in comparison a true blank slate.

Michael the Archangel (Michelmas, September 29)

Michael enjoyed popularity in Liguria. The number of churches in the Riviera Levante dedicated to him (12) ranked behind only Mary (26) and Martin (16) and was ahead of another local favorite, John the Baptist (8).¹⁹ This

19. See Carlo Moggio, “Il culto dei santi nel medioevo: alcune considerazioni quantitative e tipologiche sulle dediche pievane e parrocchiale nell'arcidiocesi Genovese di Levante (secoli X–XIII),” *Mélanges de L'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 117 (2005): 317–18. This article concerns the Levante, the Riviera west of Genoa, but Jacopo knew this area well if he needed more reasons to emphasize Michael.

long chapter gave Jacopo a unique opportunity to think about some topics that could come up in no other place.²⁰ He understood Michael's unique status as the only angel, the only nonhuman, who was a saint.²¹ Toward the end of the chapter Jacopo states that one of the reasons for this holy day is that Michael represents all the angels who merit commemoration.²² Two other feasts, All Saints and All Souls, similarly had a collective purpose, without any single example standing out as the one who in a sense stands in for the others. Bartholomew of Trent mentioned the other archangels, Gabriel and Raphael, who appear in scripture, but they are not saints and are not named in this chapter of *The Golden Legend*.²³ Michael and his adversary, the fallen archangel Lucifer, were the pairing making a holy day devoted to the former meaningful.

Jacopo is most engaged in the postbiblical significance of Michael, especially his role as psychopomp conducting the souls of the blessed to heaven. This function makes Michael unlike any other saint, but Jacopo nowhere worries about what sort of creature Michael might be. He is for sure an angel, and this chapter gives Jacopo the chance to explain his angelology, but he does not venture into categorizing what sort of being an angel actually is. Instead, Jacopo raises four issues to explore: Michael's appearances in this world, his victories (as over demons and the dragon in Revelation), his dedications (at holy places like Monte Gargano), and his commemorations (Michael as a synecdoche for all angels). The appearances open up a historical perspective, and Jacopo is well informed, from a variety of sources, especially a book on Michael's apparitions and a commentary by Jerome on the book of Daniel. The former, as well as other sources, focuses on Michael's famous appearance in a cave at Monte Gargano in central Italy in the year 390. Jacopo understood from a variety of old traditions that Michael was associated with underground places, water and sources of water, and a bull that often played some part in the narrative. A similar water appearance, although this time concerning the sea, occurred just off the coast of Normandy in 710 and is the genesis for the enduring significance of Mont Saint Michel. Jacopo knows these two places became sites

20. *LA*, 986–1001.

21. For a general medieval context on Michael from a perspective in which Jacopo has only a small part, see my *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000–1400* (Baltimore, 2007), 192–201.

22. *LA*, 995.

23. *BdeT*, 298–301, who may set Jacopo on the path to looking first at the books of Daniel and Revelation.

of devotion and pilgrimage, and by his time the unnamed Normans have tied the two together. Closer to home and more meaningful to Jacopo was Michael's appearance in Rome during a time of plague in the time of Pope Gregory the Great (possibly the 590s). Jacopo had considered this calamity before when accounting for the origin of the Greater Litanies. He associates St. George (another warrior saint) with fighting the plague and notes that a fort in Rome is now called Castel Sant'Angelo in honor of Michael.²⁴ Jacopo needs no source to confirm here what he probably saw with his own eyes. These significant visits by Michael to the earth (and Italy) in more recent times were another major justification for his place in the liturgical calendar.

Jacopo had read his Pseudo-Denis on celestial hierarchies and knew all about the choirs of angels—the highest seraphim, cherubim, and thrones, the middle dominations, virtues, and powers, and the last principalities, archangels, and angels. Much of this chapter consists of long explanations of the functions of these species of angels. Angels are the *concives*, fellow citizens, along with humans, in this world as well as the next. (Fallen angels and people have no place in a chapter on Michael.) Angels mattered to Jacopo, and he was no mere conveyer of received truths. Let us focus on his original way of describing why angels matter. Because angels are our guardians, ministers, brothers, fellow citizens, carriers of our souls to heaven, presenters of our prayers to God, warriors of God, and consolers to those undergoing tribulations, people should honor them.²⁵ Jacopo accepts the traditional opinion that each person has a guardian angel especially devoted to his or her welfare. By putting this function first and enlisting the first person plural pronoun (our) throughout, Jacopo envelopes all his readers in the protective arms of the angelic host. As ministers angels are a celestial clergy conveying grace and benefits to people, entirely necessary mediators in what we can call the economy of salvation. Jacopo has a long explanation for why angels are our brothers and fellow citizens.²⁶ Implicit in the first relationship is that Jacopo conceives all angels as males, and this is the common understanding of them

24. *LA*, 989. No comment on any statue of Michael.

25. *LA*, 995: “Ipsi enim sunt custodes nostri, ministratores nostri, fratres et concives nostri, animarum nostrarum in celum portitores, orationum nostrarum apud deum representantes, Regis eterni nobilissimi milites et tribulatorum consolatores.” This is Jacopo's distinctive and original conclusion on the significance of angels. Maggioni claims that Jacopo is one of the first authors to stress guardian angels: *LA2*, 1660.

26. *LA*, 998–99, much of the spiritual context borrowed from a homily of Gregory the Great.

in the thirteenth century. (Perhaps it is important that they had any gender at all.) Familiarity with communal northern Italy in this century may have encouraged Jacopo to put a high value on the idea of sharing citizenship in a worthwhile endeavor with these entirely admirable beings. Without making too much of this point, let us note that Jacopo has not claimed that humans and angels are fellow subjects in the City of God or simply inhabitants of creation. In monarchic Europe this would have been the preferred formulation. Instead, they are fellow citizens, a shared identity not implying any sort of equality beyond that. Michael was the chief psychopomp, but here he shares this function with all angels, and implicit in the background are all those fallen angels taking souls to a different place. Explicitly Jacopo sees death and the transmigration of the soul as a journey, and in his world it is never wise to travel alone.

Jacopo's conception of prayer requires mediators, be they angels or saints. Prayer does not present itself to God's throne, which in Jacopo's celestial realm is surrounded by a hierarchy of angels comfortably familiar to someone accepting the hierarchy and subordination so strongly ingrained in his courtly society. Power always collected around its agents who served both the center and the petitioners. These mediators (along with the saints) convey these prayers without altering them. Michael is the most effective warrior for God, and this is the reason why he was so popular, along with St. George, with the warrior classes in Europe. In Michael's case it was especially helpful to have a combative saint familiar with water and the seas, where the Genoese and their enemies did most of their fighting. (The Baptist may have seemed too pacific for this task.) This idea of fighting could be extended to more elusive foes than the Pisans, like plague. Finally, angels shared with saints and humans alike the talent for consoling people in a world filled with tribulations. One of the good things about having a guardian angel was that he also served as an immortal friend constantly reminding a person that the troubles of this world should be contextualized by the simple reminder that there was another world where such trials no longer existed and where having endured them was rewarded. Jacopo sees this world as filled with angels, usually invisible, with only Michael making some startling appearances in historical time. His chapter is on a par with the evangelists and those devoted to the main holy days of the church.

This chapter ends with recapitulating the four themes from the beginning about why Michael has a feast day (although of course he had no birthday or martyrdom). Also, unlike most of the other saints, Jacopo does not add to this life a list of near contemporary miracles, even if such were

available to him. Jacopo is by no means embarrassed by what we might call the cult of the angels. There seems to be something a little old-fashioned about them, however, and he also does not care to mention their significant roles in contemporary Islam and Judaism, if he cared to learn about it. Saints nearly monopolized the liturgical calendar, and even Gabriel had no day and was not treated as a saint. Since the earliest church there had always been something special about Michael coexisting with a fear of angelolatry. Michael, like George, was frequently portrayed in armor with a sword in hand, precisely the kind of friend worth having.

John the Baptist (June 24)

Since Jacopo had already written or planned a long chapter on the beheading of the Baptist, the holiday commemorating his birthday inevitably focused attention on his origins.²⁷ The actual birth dates of saints were rarely remembered or celebrated, but John was no ordinary saint. Many previous writers had told the story of Elizabeth and Zacharias, her unexpected pregnancy and his lapse into silence.²⁸ Many good reasons justified paying attention to John's birth, and Jacopo enjoyed displaying his abilities as an exegete in explaining them. What more was there to think about or write? Jacopo cites John of Belet as his authority for an anecdote about Paul the Deacon, the historian of the Lombards.²⁹ Like Zacharias, Paul once lost the power of speech and regained it. In Belet this story appears before the actual entry on John's birth, so we can be sure that Jacopo kept reading and recognized all the details surrounding the liturgy for the vigil and day of the feast. Since he was not writing a liturgical work, he skips all this material down to the end of a very detailed analysis.

What catches Jacopo's eye is a point that had interested him before, the burning of the Baptist's bones and the subsequent fate of his relics.³⁰ As we have seen, a tradition held that these relics were now in Genoa, and this partly accounts for the saint's special significance in Liguria. But Jacopo joins Belet in selecting this feast as the place to explain an ancient custom of gathering bones of dead animals and burning them on this day. One reason for doing

27. *LA*, 540–51.

28. *BdeT*, 170–71, makes this story the centerpiece of his brief account of the octave of John's nativity.

29. *LA*, 550, *JdeB*, cap. 135, p. 261, a nice example of how Jacopo quotes directly from a source.

30. *JdeB*, cap. 137, pp. 268–70. Robert Bartlett considers Belet's story in *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2008), 71–72.

this concerns dragons, which fly through the air, are born in waters (a hint of John's relevance?), and walk the earth. When the dragons are flying they become sexually aroused and ejaculate sperm into wells and running waters, and this results in a deadly year (*letalit annus*), presumably from poisoned water, an explanation for epidemics that would not only apply to dragons but in the fourteenth century to Jews, lepers, and others. Somehow burning the bones fumigates the air and averts this peril, but Jacopo leaves us in the dark as to the actual mechanism here. Apart from the waters, the only common theme is cremated bones. Jacopo calls the burning of bones an ancient tradition (hence older than John), but he gives no sense of whether or not it continued into his own time. Beleth brought up in this context a feast on the first Sunday of Lent (far from June 24) called Brandons, on which torches or fires were set ablaze, in order to commemorate John as the light, lantern, and precursor of Christ.³¹ The second reason for burning the animal bones is more prosaic, a direct connection to the gathering and burning of John's bones. Jacopo suggests that just as John decreased as Jesus increased, in some way the burning of his bones (and by implication the later burning of other bones) provided light to the world, as John did. (But again, no Brandons.) Jacopo's reasons for including this explanation are not clear, but he seems to be implying that burning bones somehow benefits people, either by honoring John or possibly as a harbinger of spring and resumed growth. Perhaps he could not resist including the fanciful story about dragons. Beleth may have set Jacopo's mind working in this direction because when he mentions cremating animal bones he writes that animals mean dragons, and he cites a phrase from Psalms (148:7) to clinch his point.³² Beleth connects this business to the trumpeting (*grunnitus*, he may have known what elephants sound like) of elephants and the squealing of piglets as other ways in which animals affect events in this world. Jacopo contributes the healing powers of smoke, or fumigation, and mentions no other creatures.

Jacopo concludes with another story from Paul the Deacon about John appearing to Rothar, king of the Lombards.³³ The story is not important, but Jacopo's use of it is. Twice in this chapter Jacopo has cited Paul the

31. JdeB, cap. 137, p. 269; Jacopo does not mention Brandons, which may have been more important in the north of Europe as an antidote to the gloom of winter. The Brandons also raises the possibility that inaugurating a feast for John's birth was settled on June 24 because of the bones.

32. JdeB, cap. 137, p. 267; the phrase is "Dragons, praise the lord from the earth" and the waters, sperm, and disease in this connection.

33. LA, 551, and BdeT, 171, who has other stories from Paul the Deacon and is clearly Jacopo's source.

historian of the Lombards, but both times he borrowed the quotations from two of his constant companions, Bartholomew of Trent and John of Beleth. Jacopo may have known this work directly, but he did not have it at hand when writing about John the Baptist, and why should he? Later we will look for signs that Jacopo turned to this work when Lombard Italy was relevant to his topic. Jacopo had a few sources available to him that we no longer possess, and he did not always have at hand some rare works now commonly available to everyone, like *The History of the Lombards*. Jacopo occasionally credited Bartholomew and John for their facts, but when they had quoted from an anterior source like Paul, he thought it best to name the original author and not a subsequent borrower (like himself). The name Paul the Deacon also gave more weight to a book than the names of obscure liturgists. The other main point is that Jacopo included no miracle story about John the Baptist more recent than the Lombards, except for the story of how his bones ended up in Genoa, recounted in the chapter on his beheading. Florence and its patron saint were not on his mind; they never were.

The Baptist's life gave Jacopo the chance to relate another nativity story and highlight the silence of Zacharias. A preacher would inevitably ponder John's powerful voice and his father's protracted muteness. John's words about Jesus were a second annunciation, and the most important occasion for public speaking any preacher could hope for from one of the greatest biblical models of preaching.

Mary Magdalene (July 22)

Apart from the special feasts of the Virgin Mary, this Mary is the first ordinary woman whose life Jacopo wrote about at length.³⁴ Jacopo puts himself squarely in one firm tradition about this Mary from Magdala, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, a wealthy family derived from a kingly line.³⁵ He accounts for this Mary's reputation as a sinner because she was happy to be rich—no hint of a fallen woman here. This Mary is the one who washed Jesus' feet, and her sister Martha was the woman cured of the effusion of blood. Jacopo is definitely a lumpner when it comes to New Testament traditions; the smaller the circle of characters, the better. Having solved to his

34. *LA*, 628–42.

35. See Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), 7.

satisfaction the tangle of the New Testament Marys, Jacopo was left with his common problem with these holy people—what happened to them after the Bible? Jacopo departs from Bartholomew and turns to old authorities to describe how after Ascension when the disciples dispersed, Mary and her family (including the mysterious Lazarus) fled west and ended up in Marseilles.³⁶ Mary is important in the bringing of Christianity to Marseilles, a pagan city where she preached against idolatry. Jacopo as a famous Dominican preacher is very matter of fact about Mary's preaching, but since she had spoken to the risen Christ on Easter, her eyewitness authority was incontestable. After these activities Mary retreated to the life of a hermit and lived unknown for thirty years. This admirable and quiet life is something Jacopo wrote about at length; perhaps this role conformed more closely to what Jacopo actually thought was the proper secluded place for women in the spiritual life. At any rate Mary Magdalene died a spectacularly appropriate death, in church after receiving communion from the hands of the saintly bishop Maximinus, one of the original seventy-two disciples and the reputed author of her earliest biography. Mary was buried in Aix-en-Provence.³⁷

Jacopo knows from his northern French authorities, Jean de Mailly and Vincent of Beauvais, the story of how in the time of Charlemagne (769) the duke of Burgundy and his wife relocated Mary's remains to their new monastery at Vézelay.³⁸ Jacopo joins his authorities in claiming that Aix had been devastated by pagans, the term he uses for Saracen raiders, so this translation of relics was an entirely appropriate good deed. There is no hint here that Jacopo visited what was becoming one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in France.

Besides concluding this chapter with some suitable miracle stories, Jacopo takes up one controversial issue about Mary Magdalene. "Some say" that she was engaged to marry John the Evangelist, who abandoned her when called by Jesus.³⁹ This Mary then gave herself up to every vice, and Jacopo suggests here this tale may be the origin of the tradition that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. In any case Jesus converted Mary, so that John's calling would not be

36. *LA*, 636; all this and what follows extracted from Vincent of Beauvais. The history of the church in Marseilles interested their neighbors the Ligurians.

37. See Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *Making of the Magdalene: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2000) for more details on the subsequent history of her cult.

38. *LA*, 639.

39. *LA*, 640–41, for this and what follows.

the cause of her fall. What is interesting about this tale is that, after retelling it in nine lines in the modern edition, he dismisses it as false and frivolous. It is ironic that John's gospel is one of the sources for Mary's life and indeed the confusion about exactly who she was. Jacopo has no patience for any tradition other than the saintly Mary from first to last. This chapter is another piece of evidence in the complex portrait of Jacopo's opinions on women, holy or otherwise. Jacopo's Magdalene was to be praised more as a model hermit than preacher—something he would not have tolerated from any contemporary woman.

Paul (June 29)

A brief look at this long chapter is instructive.⁴⁰ The separate feasts commemorating Paul's conversion and imprisonment mean that Jacopo wrote more on this apostle than any of his subjects except Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Given all this attention, the works of his numerous predecessors from Jerome to Bartholomew of Trent, and that most of what Jacopo has at his disposal comes from the familiar New Testament accounts in Acts and Paul's letters, what Jacopo omits is more revealing than what he includes. Since our interest is how Jacopo thinks, and not in the details of Paul's life and works, this method is beneficial, provided we are cautious about inferring why Jacopo omits some things.

Jacopo concludes with a long extract from a homily on Paul by John Chrysostom; hence he does not include any of the miracle stories ordinarily wrapping up one of his long chapters. The only material from the intervening eight centuries is a curious story from Gregory of Tours. This is a clue to the omissions. Gregory relates that in the time of Emperor Justin II (565–78, so in his own life) a desperate man was preparing to hang himself but was also praying to Paul for help.⁴¹ But then a foul spirit (*umbra squalida*) appeared to the man encouraging him to get on with it without delay, in our terms urging immediate suicide. At the last minute another spirit appeared, this one advising delay, telling the bad spirit to leave because Paul the advocate was coming. At this point the man returned to himself, threw aside the rope, and performed appropriate penance. In this case the mere threat of Paul's appearance accomplishes the good result—the point is that Paul does not come, that is not what he does. Jacopo's next point concerns an issue

40. *LA*, 576–97, one of the longest.

41. *LA*, 583, directly from Gregory's book on miracles, or from the extract in Vincent of Beauvais.

Pope Gregory raised about the power of Paul's chains, a theme Jacopo takes up in detail elsewhere and something else interesting about this saint—he accomplishes miracles, in this case through the agency of a thing, a relic not of his body but a chain. These miracles were presumably still occurring in Rome, but Jacopo has no more recent authority than Gregory the Great. Paul was so powerful a saint that he did not need to appear personally in order to help anyone.

It is not surprising that Jacopo, as a priest and Dominican, includes lengthy commentary on a letter from Pseudo-Denis to Timothy about the death of their teacher Paul.⁴² Jacopo was no stranger to Paul's actual letters, often citing them in the *Legenda Aurea*: Romans (20), 1 Corinthians (14), 2 Corinthians (11), Galatians (3), Ephesians (5), Philippians (6), Colossians (3), 2 Thessalonians (1), and the pastoral letters (6). Ten of these sixty-nine citations appear in this chapter on Paul.⁴³ Jacopo does not use this chapter as a place to lay out any of Paul's teaching, either on the mysteries of the faith or the practical matters of ministry. My impression is that Paul baffled Jacopo. He knew many of the famous verses, he had read the letters carefully, he had studied theology, but there were many issues too complex, like the actual path to salvation, to explain here. Paul was an exemplary apostle and martyr, and this was worth recounting. It does not appear that Paul figured prominently as one of the principal saints still involved in the miraculous happenings in the distant or recent past as Jacopo understood sacred history. Pauline theology was not as direct as the story Matthew told in his gospel or as well written as the Psalms. Paul was hard to explain to fellow priests, let alone the laity who were not the intended audience of this work.

Augustine (August 28)

This immense chapter reveals that Augustine was probably Jacopo's favorite author and mentor, and that he knew many of his works, 93 in 230 dictated books, quite well.⁴⁴ Sherry Reames rightly points out that this long entry is

42. *LA*, 584; Jacopo assumes along with everyone else that this letter by Denis is the Areopagite mentioned in Acts.

43. Figures tabulated from editor's lists of sources cited. By way of contrast, Jacopo cites only Peter's second letter, and only four times, once in the chapters on Peter.

44. *LA*, 841–72. Maggioni thinks that the command of Augustine reveals that Jacopo had secretarial assistance with this entry, *LA2*, 1629. He derived this opinion from E. Colledge, "James of Voragine's *Legenda Sancti Augustini* and Its Sources," *Augustiniana* 35 (1985): 300, where the actual claim is that Jacopo was part of a "group of collaborators." I think the entry actually reflects deep reading in Jacopo's favorite writer and role model.

a sign of how much Jacopo valued Augustine, and how our reticent author used the chapter as a way to discuss Augustine's many memorable personal experiences.⁴⁵ Augustine's own *Confessions*, an autobiography of the first half of his life, his many letters and sermons, as well as the full biography by his contemporary Possidius make Augustine the best-known Christian theologian, and he was also among the most prolific. Jacopo had a vast amount of material to synthesize, but it is not our aim to follow him in this endeavor. Instead, our subject is Jacopo and how he thinks, and there may be no better way to learn about that than to investigate how Jacopo interpreted Augustine's great book, *The City of God*. This work is a challenge to all Augustine's readers because it is so long and takes up so many themes that it may appear to baffle synthesis, conjecture, or even a brief explanation of its contents. In his own or subsequent ages, students of Augustine seem to divide into those who have read the entire book and those who consulted it on various themes, or indeed those who read none of it but know snippets from other books. Jacopo also lived nine centuries after Augustine, and he inherited a long tradition of readings and interpretations of *The City of God*, down to Cassiodorus. Jacopo mentions no subsequent commentator, but he was struck by that remarkable work of Augustine's old age, the *Retractions*, in which he reconsidered, explained, and in some cases regretted what he had said.⁴⁶ Jacopo may have identified with this busy author and bishop, though whether or not he added to this chapter when he had himself become a busy archbishop is not clear.

Bartholomew of Trent also had what for him was a very long entry on Augustine, evidence for the common view that Augustine was the most widely read author in the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ Bartholomew summarizes the thesis of *The City of God* in a remarkable phrase: "in which he proves that in this life the righteous should be oppressed and the impious should, however, flourish."⁴⁸ This view is one great lesson of Augustine's book, written to reassure those suffering in this world to keep in their hearts the heavenly city where they would receive their reward, and conversely to ignore the travails of this life. Jacopo quotes this line word for word, not naming Bartholomew as his source, and adds only the word "ostendit" to the end of the quotation,

45. Sherry Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (Madison, 1985), 135, at the beginning of a perceptive chapter on Augustine.

46. *LA*, 871–72.

47. *BdeT*, 257–64.

48. *BdeT*, 262: "de civitate Dei composuit, in quo probat in hac vita iustos debere premi, impios autem florere."

to make clear the parallel between what Augustine showed or proved about good and bad people in this world and the next.⁴⁹ Then, however, Jacopo goes on to provide a longer summary of the book, in his own words, and apparently his own thoughts. This book is about two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, and about their kings because Augustine says that Christ is the king of Jerusalem and the devil is the king of Babylon.⁵⁰ As he says in this book, these two cities are forged by two types of love; the love of self grows into a contempt for God and forms the earthly city, while the love for God grows into contempt for the self and makes the heavenly city. Love and contempt, God and the world, existed in a steady state in Jacopo's mind; more of one led inevitably to less of the other.

Making clear that Augustine's book is in fact about two cities is useful to know but no more than that. Jacopo usually cited *The City of God* by title and book, in my view a sign he knew it well and possessed a copy. What Jacopo sees as the primary distinction between Babylon and Jerusalem is important, because he had many points of comparison at his fingertips like idolatry and salvation, to name only two. Hovering over the entire work was the meaning of the sack of Rome, an event no longer meaningful to Jacopo. (Augustine was a contemporary to this event in 410, and it was the occasion for his big book.) Jacopo read John the Evangelist's works carefully enough to come away with the idea that love was central to the kind of understanding of Christianity he wanted to have. Love of self inevitably led to loving the world, or it could start the other way, with living for life's pleasures inevitably making one's self the center of everything. Jacopo suspected wealth and condemned avarice and usury at every turn. He was a priest with a strong sense of humility. Love for God and contempt for himself were Jacopo's guiding principals, and one of the reasons he so valued Augustine, apart from their shared love of learning, was that they also had these values in common.

The liturgical works were primarily concerned with services on the day and do not have to include a complexity like *The City of God*.⁵¹ Jacopo,

49. *LA*, 855.

50. *LA*, 855, for this and what follows: "ostendit, ubi de duplici civitate, scilicet Iherusalem et Babilonica, et earum regibus ait quia rex Iherusalem Christus, rex Babilonis dyabolus. Quas duas civitates, ut ibidem dicit, duo amores sibi fabricant, quia civitatem terrenam constituit amor sui crescens usque ad contemptum dei, civitatem celestem amor dei crescens ad contemptum sui."

51. See for example John of Belet, whose main issue is what to do when two saints' days occur on the same date, as was the case for Augustine and Julian: should the office of the most famous one prevail, and how did one weigh the competing claims of martyrs and confessors? *JdeB*, cap. 148, pp. 287–88. Sicard of Cremona's briefer *Mitralis* has only fifty-four entries in the section devoted to holy days, and he had no room for Augustine.

thinking like a biographer and historian, followed his comments on this book with an account of the Vandal attacks in North Africa, misdated to 440, as is Augustine's death. (As we will see, accurate dates are not Jacopo's strong point.) Besides noting many miracles associated with Augustine, Jacopo knows as well as any of his authorities that the body of Augustine was first moved to Sardinia because of the Muslim conquest of North Africa, and then in the year 718 his relics were brought to Pavia for greater safety.⁵² Miracles subsequently occurring at the new tomb in nearby Pavia were familiar to Jacopo, who had most likely visited the city many times in his capacity as a Dominican superior.

For all the space Augustine devoted to his childhood and formative early experiences, this is the one part of his life about which Jacopo is almost entirely silent. No weeping over Dido's fate or stealing pears for a love of sin here. The childhoods of saints were not important to Jacopo unless somehow this stage of life exhibited signs of precocious sanctity. Nothing about Augustine's youth suggested that outcome, and Jacopo must note his nine years of Manichean heresy.⁵³ Jacopo describes Augustine's adolescence, those years around his nineteenth year, as a period of philosophical inquiry centered on Cicero. The one comment Jacopo makes on his youth is a strange one: Augustine was led to such trifles (the context is Carthage and heresy) as he said a fig tree weeps, when someone picks a leaf or a fig.⁵⁴ Jacopo learned this from reading the *Confessions* (3:9), but he must have been relying on his memory because Augustine mentions nothing about leaves, and the Latin is not the same. Trees or plants weeping or speaking is an engaging theme, and Virgil has an old story of Polydorus speaking to Aeneas through the plants torn over his grave.⁵⁵ Jacopo does not seem to know Virgil, and he was not inspired (like Dante) by this image. A story Jotham tells in Judges (9:7–21) is a parable about kingship, and in it a talking fig tree rejects being king of the trees because it does not want to give up its sweetness and good fruit (9:11). Perhaps somewhere in his vast oeuvre Augustine commented on this biblical passage, but there is nothing about leaves here either, and the story's context is far from trivial. Jacopo is not crediting Augustine with a piece of botanical knowledge about a fig tree's sap flowing when something is broken off from it. Jacopo mentions this only to use Augustine's own example of how trifling

52. *LA*, 860.

53. *LA*, 842–43, for this and what follows.

54. *LA*, 842: "Ad has etiam nugas adductus est ut arborem ficis plorare diceret, cum ab ea ficus vel folium tolleretur." The Brepols databases contain nothing like this Latin, by Augustine or anyone else.

55. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagels (New York, 2006), 104–5: Book 3, lines 29–37.

his mind was when he was a heretic. Unlike Augustine, Jacopo seldom paused his intellectual processes to comment on anything about the natural world.

Gregory the Great (March 12)

Another long chapter reveals in this case what we know from other entries, that Jacopo knew well the standard works, especially the *Dialogues*, by this pope.⁵⁶ He also noted that Paul the Deacon had written a long notice of this pope's life (presumably in his *History of the Lombards*) and that a subsequent writer, John the Deacon, had edited and expanded it. Bartholomew of Trent also drew on John the Deacon, but he drastically abbreviated that work and began his own entry with a comprehensive list of Gregory's writings, a style Jacopo did not imitate in his chapters.⁵⁷ Three episodes from Gregory's life reveal Jacopo's thinking as well as how he reworked received materials.

Two stories concern Gregory and natural disasters, the part of nature always engaging Jacopo because it revealed Providence at work in the world. The first episode concerns a famous flooding of the Tiber and the ensuing attacks on the city by serpents and a dragon.⁵⁸ Gregory's organizing of prayers and processions averted catastrophe and were signs of his deep understanding of the practicalities of pastoral care. Saints doing good captured Jacopo's attention. We have already seen this pope's role in the chapter on St. Michael where the archangel saved Rome, again through Gregory's intercession, during a terrible outbreak of plague. Here Jacopo, drawing on Bartholomew but also Gregory's own works, notes how the pope devised litanies and processions around Easter with images of the Virgin Mary and Luke the physician.⁵⁹ Jacopo also notes the role of an angel (not named here as Michael) and how a fortress in Rome acquired its name (a castle of the angel, not Michael).⁶⁰ These episodes showed Gregory working through the agency of powerful figures in the next world who were able to offer help in this one. The next episode, which we will explore at length, is a famous

56. *LA*, 285–306.

57. *BdeT*, 82–83.

58. *LA*, 288–89. This episode has received a thorough historical analysis by Paolo Squatriti, "The Floods of 589 and Climate Change at the Beginning of the Middle Ages: An Italian Microhistory," *Speculum* 85 (2010): 799–826.

59. John of Belet's entry is almost exclusively concerned with Gregory's liturgical innovations, *JdeB*, numerous entries in the index (407), but no notice of his feast day.

60. *LA*, 290. Inconsistency about Michael is a characteristic of Jacopo's silo thinking in these entries.

story in which Gregory accomplished a very unusual feat, the salvation of the pagan Roman emperor Trajan.

Jacopo introduces Trajan into the chapter on St. Gregory by telling the story of how this emperor, moved by piety, paused to give justice to a poor widow.⁶¹ Jacopo needs this episode to frame the story he really wanted to tell, and he names John Damascene as his source for part of this story. One day Gregory is crossing the Roman forum and sees the column on which he believes is the scene of Trajan and the widow. This sight overwhelms Gregory with compassion, and he goes straight to St. Peter's (across the river) and mourns with bitter tears. Gregory hears a divine voice saying that his petition is granted and that Trajan will no longer suffer eternal punishment (in hell). But the voice warns Gregory not to do this again, to pray for a damned soul. As a well-educated priest Jacopo knows that there is something wrong or at best incomplete about this story, and he has explored and relates other interpretations. Another version of the story claims that the voice pardoned Trajan; here Jacopo credits John Damascene directly as the primary witness in eastern and western accounts. Some say that Trajan was brought back to life where by grace he merited salvation, and so he was not definitively sentenced to hell. Others say that Trajan's soul had not been forgiven for all time but only to the Day of Judgment. Others claim the sentence was not fully suspended but only delayed as to time and place. On the authority of Gregory's main biographer (John the Deacon) others state that Gregory did not pray, but simply wept, and God freed Trajan from punishment in hell but did not release him from there or admit him into heaven. (This might explain Trajan in Limbo, perhaps as Dante envisioned for virtuous pagans.) Others say that eternal punishment comes in two varieties, physical pain and being denied the vision of God in the afterlife. These argue that Trajan was released from the first but not granted the second. Then Jacopo provides a more elaborate account. An angel bargains with Gregory, who, because he prayed for a damned soul, is offered the choice of spending (after his death) two days of punishment in purgatory, or to suffer serious illness for the rest of his life. Gregory piously chooses the second option and endures gout and other ailments. Jacopo neatly brings this matter to a close by quoting from two of Gregory's letters in which the pope laments his gouty condition.

61. *LA*, 296–98, for this story and the following one. How a scene in Trajan's story became embellished with a Roman legend is explained by Nancy J. Vickers, "Seeing Is Believing: Gregory, Trajan, and Dante's Art," *Dante Studies* 101 (1983): 76–77. Bartholomew of Trent briefly alludes to this story in his very different entry on Gregory, but he mentions only a pagan prince as the subject, not Trajan, and from an angel Gregory learns that this prince has been absolved of his punishment. *BdeT*, 83.

Jacopo is a stage in the retelling of a story having a continuous fascination for medieval writers, though a version of it in *The Golden Legend* guaranteed it a wide audience in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶² John the Deacon was Jacopo's source for the basic account, and this mid-ninth-century author drew on older sources from England.⁶³ Since John is the continental authority for the story, his original doubts are worth noting for what they tell us about Jacopo as a historian and how they shaped his own thinking about the unusual features of the tale.⁶⁴ Jacopo saw in John Damascene and John the Deacon that there were eastern and western Christian traditions about Trajan, and that history judged him to be one of the "good" emperors, though a pagan. No one seems to know any longer the version of Trajan's less than impeccable views on Christianity as they emerge from the letters of Pliny the Younger. John the Deacon knew very well that Gregory was a principal figure in the making of the doctrine of purgatory, and that in fact he had specifically written in his *Dialogues* that it was impermissible to pray to the saints for souls damned to hell. Hence it is best to note that Gregory lamented for Trajan; he did not pray for him. So John viewed it as incredible that by prayers Gregory obtained Trajan's release from hell and entry into heaven, and cites the passage from John (3:3) that no one who was not baptized in the Holy Spirit will enter the kingdom of heaven. Whatever baptism is at issue here, the pagan Trajan certainly never received it. (Jacopo does not cite John the Evangelist or engage with the issue of baptism.) Hence John the Deacon will only go as far as thinking Trajan released from the pains of hell, because he thinks the mercy of God would not allow all sinners to be indiscriminately punished in the same general fire. (Dante would have approved.) This is the end of John's comments on the matter.

Jacopo agrees with John that it made no sense for Gregory to be praying for a soul's release from hell. So it is possible that Trajan was only released from his torments there. John's own source had raised the problem

62. See Gordon Whatley, "The Uses of Hagiography: The Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages," *Viator* (1984): 44, also noting Aquinas's interest in the problem, probably known to Jacopo. The focus of this article is inevitably on Dante, not Jacopo.

63. John the Deacon, *Vita Sancti Gregorii Papae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 75 (Paris, 1862), cols. 105–6.

64. Vincent of Beauvais's brief account, which he says was taken from a book on Gregory's deeds, emphasizes that the pope cried and prayed and that Trajan was released from hellish torments. Gregory was warned not to pray for any more dead pagans. This brief, garbled story was no rival to Jacopo. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* (Strasbourg, 1473/74) 3:23.22.

of baptism and he addressed it, but Jacopo does not.⁶⁵ Jacopo learned from some other source about the possibility that Trajan had been resurrected from the dead, (somehow) merited grace, and obtained his glory, and so he had his sentence suspended. No one has as yet supposed that he was baptized during a brief return to life.⁶⁶ Knowing that Pope Gregory suffered from poor health led Jacopo to wrap up this episode with the curious bargain with an angel, with the apt reference to two days in purgatory. Jacopo's musings about time may have suggested to him (as well as the pope) that experiencing this duration in purgatory may be a lot longer than it would seem here, that purgatory was a place of serious purging and pain, and that no one bound for heaven would delay arrival for any reason, including temporary ailments in this life. By placing this story last in the series, Jacopo usually is indicating that he believes it to be credible, indeed possibly the most believable version. As the main hagiographer of his day, Jacopo knew that no more recent saintly pope than Gregory occupied an important place in the liturgical calendar. His own century had witnessed a run of remarkable popes, but none of them was in the running to become a saint.

Jacopo concludes this chapter with a long extract from Vincent of Beauvais summarizing the main points of Gregory's great exegetical work on the book of Job. As a skilled and effective administrator, innovator of rituals, effective interpreter of scripture, and well-known hagiographer of St. Benedict, Gregory was in every way a model for Jacopo's own career up to this point.

Bernard of Clairvaux (August 20)

Bernard (1090–1153) is the first saint in the group closest to Jacopo's own time. Famous as a preacher, author, opponent of Abelard, and abbot of Cîteaux, Bernard left his mark on twelfth-century European history. This chapter gives us the chance to see Jacopo's process of selection at work as he draws from several biographies, numerous sermons, and other works to construct a life of Bernard.⁶⁷ He and Bartholomew of Trent shared an interest in this

65. *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great: By an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Lawrence, Kan., 1968), 126–29, where this story, surviving in a single manuscript, dates from 704–18, and supposes that Trajan was baptized by Gregory's tears.

66. His fellow Dominican Humbert of Romans simply explained Trajan as saved "by divine dispensation," as recorded in the *Gestis Sanctorum*, possibly *The Golden Legend*, as the former has been dated 1266–77; see Humbert of Romans, *De dono timoris*, ed. Christine Boyer (Turnhout, 2008): xxi for dating, 41 for Trajan.

67. *LA*, 811–26.

saint, but Bartholomew takes a different approach.⁶⁸ Since Jacopo was writing a chapter on a saint, he included nothing on any popes, especially Eugenius III who received one of Bernard's most important works, nothing on the dispute with Abelard, nothing on the crusades, especially the second that he preached, or the new military order of the Templars, for which Bernard wrote the first rule. Hence Jacopo's image of Bernard is strictly that of a holy monk's life, an emphasis that might have pleased the Cistercians but was by no means a full account of his career. Though Jacopo knew Bernard's sermons and noted their appeal in general, leaving out his preaching against heresy, on the crusades, and on the Templars, subjects with strong resonances in Liguria, Jacopo steered clear of all controversies, and potential failures, as the continued popularity of Abelard's writings and the survival of heretics showed.

Jacopo was drawn to Bernard's early career and how he showed up with a number of his relatives and followers at Citeaux in 1112 to join the relatively new and obscure Cistercian order, then only fifteen years old.⁶⁹ Bernard's reputation for sanctity was wrapped up in his profession as a monk, which Jacopo praises, noting (whether accurately or not) that Bernard had been elected bishop of Genoa and Milan, offices he always refused. He did, however, agree to be abbot of the Cistercian foundation at Clairvaux, where he instituted a strict and abstemious style of living, though again, no signs of Bernard's critical exchanges with more traditional Benedictine regimes at places like Cluny. The striking pattern is that Jacopo avoids every possible topic that might be disputed and instead extracts from the standard lives of Bernard a conventional story of piety. The combative abbot's sanctity was apparent in his many posthumous miracles; he was not a martyr and whatever role he may have played as a type of confessor was not a subject on which Jacopo chose to dwell. Jacopo mentions many pious acts and posthumous miracles, stressing the 160 monasteries he built and his numerous books and tracts. Jacopo leaves the impression that Bernard was above all a saint for the preaching orders, hence especially interesting to him. In most ways this is the same emphasis he found in Bartholomew, though the latter included in his account a miracle story set in the East concerning Amalric, king of Jerusalem (ruled 1163–74).⁷⁰ This entry as well had skipped the crusades, though in this story there is a distant thread to the cross and the Templars. Since we

68. BdeT, 245–49; Bartholomew acknowledged a distant tie to Bernard through one of his relatives (245).

69. LA, 814, precise history here, not legend.

70. BdeT, 249.

know Jacopo read this account, we know he decided to omit this specific miracle, as he did all others with the slightest hint of controversy.

Dominic (August 4)

Jacopo made a major effort to write a long and inevitably positive but not partial chapter on Dominic (ca. 1170–1221).⁷¹ In keeping with his impersonal style, Jacopo does not mention that he was educated at the Dominican church and was a member of the Order of Preachers.⁷² Unlike his fellow Dominican Bartholomew of Trent, he does not use his own experience for witnessing to any miracles or even firsthand accounts of them.⁷³ In Dominic's case Jacopo had to emphasize the origins of Dominic's fame as a preacher in his efforts against the heretics around Toulouse in the time of Simon de Montfort, what we know as the Albigensian Crusade. This was a generally successful campaign in both senses, but Jacopo knew very well that the Cathars were by no means exterminated. He did not choose to mention the incomplete nature of Dominic's success. Instead, Jacopo was drawn to an unusual way Dominic expressed his piety. He recounts the famous story, originally from a life by Jordan of Saxony, about a time when Dominic proposed selling himself into slavery to relieve the poverty of a person drawn to the heretics for that reason.⁷⁴ Divine mercy spared Dominic the necessity of fulfilling this

71. *LA*, 718–44; he draws primarily on the well-known lives by Humbert of Romans and Jordan of Saxony, both master generals of the order. These, along with other sources, are edited in, *Monumenta Historica S.P.N. Dominici*, vol. 2, *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* 16 (Rome, 1935), and now a better edition of Humbert's lives of Dominic in Humbert of Romans, *Legendae Sancti Dominici*, ed. Simon Tugwell, *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* 30 (Rome, 2008), 451–532, for the main life. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea*, 164–95, discusses this life, but missed Dominic wishing to sell himself. See Reglinde Rhein, *Die Legenda aurea des Jacobus de Voragine: Die Entfaltung von Heiligkeit in "Historia" und "Doctrina"* (Cologne, 1995), 249–66, for a fine study of Jacopo's life of Dominic.

72. San Domenico was ready to accept burials by September 3, 1258, when Jacoba Malocello requested to be buried there, and she also left L20 for the building of the church: ASG, CN, Cart. N. 33, 67r. This great church no longer exists and was built on the site of an older church of St. Giles, where the Dominicans were burying people as early as 1234; see ASG, CN, Cart. N. 11, 95v. Jacopo was schooled at a convent there. By contrast, the great church of San Francesco de Castelletto, was ready for burials later, in 1250: ASG, CN, Cart. N. 21 parte I, February 23, 1250.

73. BdeT, 209–15, an immense entry for him; 214–15 recounts several miracles directly told to him.

74. *LA*, 721; the editor says this story comes from Jean de Mailly or directly from Humbert. *Monumenta Historica S.P.N. Dominici*, 385, is a far longer account. Jordan of Saxony, *ibid.*, 43, is also longer, and Jacopo's language is close to his, which may have influenced Humbert. Simon Tugwell concludes, however, "I have found no sign that he [Humbert] was aware of the *Legenda aurea*": Humbert of Romans, *Legendae Sancti Dominici*, 36. Jacopo's few sentences are abbreviations of his sources.

offer. The reality of the slave trade in Dominic's Spain and Jacopo's Liguria makes this offer entirely plausible as the best possible sign of humility, to make oneself a slave for others. In the records of the process of canonizing Dominic, Stephen, prior of the Dominicans in Lombardy (hence a predecessor of Jacopo's), testified that he knew that Dominic sold his books for money to give to the poor.⁷⁵ Jacopo, who probably knew this story, did not mention it. Selling oneself rather than one's possessions is what struck him. In order to help a woman whose brother was held in captivity by the Saracens, Dominic offered once more to sell himself to raise the ransom, but once again God intervened and found another way, ostensibly because Dominic was needed to relieve the spiritual captivity of so many others.⁷⁶

Jacopo tells the standard story of the order's founding and Dominic's many miracles in this life and afterwards. Like Jordan and Humbert of Romans, he is drawn to stories connected to high members of the clergy, theologians, and Bologna, the ambit of the early Dominican priests. Dominic's posthumous miracles derive from many sources, including a bundle of miracles in Hungary. One of these is about a slave boy raised from the dead by Dominic's power.⁷⁷ Other miracles occurred in Bologna, Sicily, Piedmont, and even distant Tripoli in the crusader East, but Jacopo claims no personal knowledge of any of them. It is remarkable that in his travels as a Dominican official he did not hear anything worth retelling and instead relied on the written authority of others. As we have seen, Jacopo was not averse to including a vivid contemporary story on his own evidence.

Signs of Jacopo's personality come out in the attention paid to Dominic as a slave of God and potential slave himself, a preacher interested in university

75. *Acta Canonizationis Sancti Dominici in Monumenta Historica S.P.N. Dominici*, 153.

76. *LA*, 722; charitable efforts to ransom captives were a well-respected sign of spiritual merit. Bartholomew mentions neither of these stories, Humbert has both, and Jordan does not mention the second; for Humbert, see *Legendae Sancti Dominici*, 469–70. The fourteenth-century translation of the *LA* into French by Jean de Vignay skips these stories, and the fifteenth-century translation into English by the person known as the Sinful Wretch (who used the Latin to correct the French text he or she was using) mentions these stories. See Warren F. Manning, "The Jean de Vignay Version of the Life of Saint Dominic," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 40 (1970): 29–46; *Gilte Legende*, vol. 2, ed. Richard Hamer (Oxford, 2007), 540, understanding slavery as thralldom. The tangled problems of the *LA*'s reception may be hinted at by noting that the first printed translation (1476) into French by Jean de Batailler put the stories back in.

77. *LA*, 739, the *iuvenis* is a *mancipius*. Jacopo found the Hungarian miracles in Constantine Urbevatanus (of Orvieto), *Vita Beati Dominici in Monumenta Historica S.P.N. Dominici*, 399. The youth is also a *mancipius* in Constantine's more detailed version of the story.

training, and a saint of European-wide significance. Unlike Bartholomew, Jacopo recounts nothing on his own authority or reveals that he was a Dominican. Jacopo was more concerned about Dominic as a holy man functioning in an ecclesiastical hierarchy than he was in Dominic the practitioner of heroic austerities. Some of these contrasts will be clearer as we turn to Dominic's great contemporary, Francis, the other holy founder of a religious order.

Jacopo missed no opportunity to inject color symbolisms he saw everywhere. In a sermon on Dominic he wrote about the different colors of the horses of the quadriga: red for martyrs, black for confessors, white for virgins, and mixed colors for doctors of the church.⁷⁸ Dominic was all these except a martyr, though his austerities and risky life brought him close to it. He also expressed the hope of evangelizing the Cumans on the north shore of the Black Sea, in his time the easternmost outpost of Western Christendom. Jacopo never took his preaching to the frontiers of Christianity and probably never faced a crowd of Muslims, Jews, or heretics in Europe. Apart from revering the founder of his order, Jacopo portrayed Dominic as a spiritual giant whose path was too arduous for most of his friars, including himself.

Francis (October 4)

Francis is probably the best-known medieval saint, and Jacopo had rich recent lives by Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure to draw upon, as well as other sources, to construct this chapter.⁷⁹ Since some episodes in Francis's life are so well known, this chapter is an excellent place to look for Jacopo's process of selection as he relates some events and not others, or sharply compresses a major issue into a sentence. Bartholomew of Trent has, for him, a long entry on Francis, spending a few words on some subjects to which Jacopo devotes many sentences. Both had Celano at their disposal, so we have a great deal of intertextuality here, more than we need.⁸⁰ For example, Bartholomew has a brief account of how at Greccio at Christmas Francis built a crèche (the first one) with the cow and the donkey, and hay that afterwards brought many to health.⁸¹ Jacopo mentions none of this, and before looking

78. SS, 284r.

79. LA, 1016–32, and numerous biographies since, note Jacopo's fellow Dominican: Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca, 2012), and André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, trans. Michael F. Cusato (New Haven, 2012). Neither takes any notice of Jacopo, despite gestures toward Francis's *Nachleben*.

80. BdeT, 305–7.

81. BdeT, 307, adapted from Celano.

for reasons why this omission may have occurred, it is best to look for patterns in the decisions about what mattered in his narrative.

Some major aspects of Francis's life had to appear in any notice of him. Bartholomew mentions the stigmata, the wounds of Jesus on his hands, feet, and side, as having appeared on Francis's body as a result of a vision.⁸² Jacopo has a longer summary of the stigmata and makes clear that Francis hid these wounds from public view, though some saw them before he died and others afterwards.⁸³ Two posthumous miracles directly involving the stigmata prove for Jacopo the truth of the matter. Likewise, no biographies of Francis could fail to note his involvement with lepers or his strict adherence to a conception of apostolic poverty. A summary of these topics constitutes the broad path of agreement on what was necessary in any life of Francis, and we find Jacopo at home in this tradition, as he should be in compiling the lives of the saints. Let us instead note a few things that we might think should be part of the common stock of information about Francis but are not. Francis made a remarkable trip to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1219 and preached to the sultan near Damietta where a large crusader force was encamped.⁸⁴ His novel intervention on the side of mission rather than warfare does not appear in Jacopo's account (or in Bartholomew's). It may be that Francis preaching in Egypt mattered more in subsequent centuries (and to contemporary historians) than it did in the thirteenth century. And as we have seen, Jacopo was not especially interested in crusading, which in his own times had become one embarrassing failure after another. Perhaps because nothing tangible resulted from this travel and preaching, Jacopo skipped it.

In 1212 Francis was a major part of the reason why Clare, a woman from a prominent family in Assisi, left secular life and the prospect of marriage and began the process of transforming herself into a famous Franciscan nun for whom Francis wrote a rule. Clare became a saint as well in 1255, two

82. BdeT, 307, also from Celano; he uses the phrase "apparuisse dicunt" to introduce the wounds; the identity of "they" is not specified; presumably the witnesses, when Francis was alive or dead.

83. L4, 1023. Jacopo also wrote a long model sermon on the stigmata, SS, 386v. Alain Boureau rightly stresses the part Jacopo assigned in a sermon to Francis's imagination as part of the story of the stigmata; see his *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, trans. Teresa Fagan (Chicago, 2006), 176. By way of comparison, Federico Visconti wrote four long sermons on Francis and does not mention the stigmata: *Les sermons et la visite pastorale de Federico Visconti archevêque de Pise (1253–1277)*, ed. Nicole Bériou et al. (Rome, 2001), 756–90. As a priest a generation older than Jacopo, Federico was able to describe in moving terms how he saw, heard, and touched Francis in Bologna, probably in 1222 (*ibid.*, 789).

84. There is a fine modern study of this episode by John Tolan, *St. Francis and the Sultan* (Oxford, 2009).

years after her death. Saints appearing in the lives of other saints is a complex problem in presenting these people, but Jacopo had faced this many times. So his decision to leave Clare out of his life of Francis is telling, as is the fact that she receives no special notice anywhere in the *Legenda Aurea*, or in Bartholomew's book. Here again the role of women in thirteenth-century religious life may be more important to observers in later centuries than it was to Jacopo. Yet the archbishop of Pisa, Federico Visconti, wrote in 1255 a brief piece of advice to Pope Alexander IV promoting the canonization of Clare and a sermon delivered in Pisa on a local holy woman, the Blessed Ubaldesca.⁸⁵ Hence Jacopo's ideas on women are complex and particular. The position of women in the Franciscan and Dominican orders was a contested matter Jacopo completely avoided. When we look below at the life of Elizabeth of Hungary, we will have the chance to see what Jacopo valued in the life of a near contemporary female saint.

Jacopo did not get into the story of the founding of the order (apart from the unskippable confirmation by Pope Innocent III) or how it worked during Francis's lifetime. Jacopo was very interested in ecclesiastical organization, but it was not a vital part of explaining Francis's holiness. More important to him was the story he got from Celano that Francis and Dominic had once met in Rome, before Cardinal Ugolino of Ostia (the future Pope Gregory IX). According to this legend, Dominic offered to put his people under Francis's authority, and Francis absolutely refused, claiming that his brothers were "minor" because they did not presume to be greater than anyone.⁸⁶ Bartholomew mentions that this pope canonized Francis, and Jacopo does not. Since we presume that Jacopo wrote his book for fellow clerics, it makes sense that he did not bother with things they probably knew or were not consulting the *Legenda Aurea* to find out and put in a sermon.

A rich vein of material existed for explaining Francis and nature, and especially his interactions with various animals and even worms and insects.⁸⁷ For example, Francis preached to the birds and sometimes had special powers over them, like an ability to command their silence.⁸⁸ He also kept a pet cricket who sang to him and whom he addressed as Sister. Jacopo drew from Celano the idea that these stories, and many like them, testified to Francis's

85. Visconti, *Les sermons et la visite pastorale*, 970 and 965–69.

86. *LA*, 1024–25, a story not in Bartholomew of Trent. Most modern historians doubt this meeting ever happened; see for example Thompson, *Francis of Assisi*, 77, 220.

87. I have explored this topic in *The Medieval Discovery of Nature* (Cambridge, 2012), 35–39.

88. *LA*, 1025, for this and what follows.

simplicity. Preaching to the birds was how Francis encouraged them to a love for their Creator, and this presumes of course that they were capable of loving and honoring God, even if they had no souls and were not saved. Francis was no protoenvironmentalist or natural historian, but his love of God's creation included every bit of it, down to the very stones. Little of this appears in Bartholomew, and not much more in Jacopo, who cannot explain (by no means alone in this) what inspired Francis to hold these idiosyncratic views on nature.

Jacopo has selected from the extensive materials at his disposal a formidable collection of Francis's many miracles, though nothing about the miraculous hay from the manger. He knew about the importance of Lady Poverty to Francis, a view of the material world he completely shared. Striking events like the stigmata and preaching to the birds merited notice. Jacopo omitted the Christmas crèche, the crusades, Clare, and nearly all the personal details bringing Francis to life as a distinctive personality. Since Jacopo's sources knew very little about his early life he also had almost nothing to say about it, but on these other subjects, where he had all the information one could want, he chose to skip them entirely or, as in the case of nature, to write as little as possible. As a Dominican reader of Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure, perhaps we can understand his process of selection, at least with respect to Francis. Jacopo's gaze was primarily that of a northern Italian. The Holy Land was obviously central to his understanding of the rise of Christianity. After the heroic early age of the apostles and martyrs, Jacopo lost interest in the eastern Mediterranean. (Whether or not this remained the case for the rest of Jacopo's life is a question to investigate when we consider his last years as civic historian and archbishop of Genoa.) In the same way, the holy women of the early church, especially Mary, always received respectful attention from Jacopo. Closer to his own time and Italian milieu, Jacopo did not see women as individuals, saintly or otherwise, but had a lot to say about them in their social and secular roles as wives and mothers. He certainly had much advice to offer them on family life.

One big idea Francis had was that apostolic poverty, or simply the way Jesus lived, was above all how he proposed to live in this world. Jacopo, who responded to Christianity with the training and habits of a scholastic theologian and exegete, basically agreed with every Franciscan opinion on poverty, but he would have reasonably claimed that these were the same values shared by the Dominicans in particular and other groups of lay and monastic Christians in general. The earliest gifts the Genoese made to the friars by testament, beginning in the 1220s, were often for food and clothing, signifying their basic needs. Unlike leaders like Augustine, Gregory, or Bernard,

Francis left behind a very meager collection of writings and almost nothing that could be considered in any way learned. Hence Jacopo spent most of this chapter on Francis's many miracles, which both testified to his sanctity and fitted the edifying purposes of the collection of saints' lives. These uplifting purposes did not include much notice of the natural world as opposed to human history, where Jacopo was usually sensitive to the processes and meanings of human change over time. What mattered most to Jacopo was the welfare of the souls temporarily inhabiting bodies in this world.

Peter Martyr (April 29)

The nearly contemporary Peter Martyr was a Dominican inquisitor from Verona who was assassinated by a Cathar heretic.⁸⁹ Everything about Peter was close to Jacopo's heart. A recent life as well as Pope Innocent IV's bull speedily canonizing this saint in 1253 provided Jacopo with the framework for his chapter. Peter's many miracles in his lifetime as well as after his martyrdom brought him quick fame across Europe from Spain (a miracle Jacopo dates to 1259 in Campestella is one of the best clues to the date of Jacopo's writing) to France, Flanders, and Germany, and many miracles took place in northern Italy. What Jacopo knew was that northern Italy was "pulsulating" with heretics and the Dominicans were on the front lines of investigating and stamping out Cathars. In fact Peter's parents were, according to Jacopo, heretics, and even as a child Peter was capable of detecting heretical opinions, like thinking that the devil had created everything in this world.⁹⁰ Pope Innocent IV, well known to Jacopo as a fellow Ligurian, theologian, and canon lawyer, figures prominently in this life, mainly because he put the entire prestige of the papacy behind what was then the shortest period of time between death and official sainthood.

Peter's assassination on the road from Como to Milan and the heretical plot that accomplished it were the heart of the story, and Jacopo had detailed accounts of this exemplary martyrdom and subsequent miracles. Even a characteristic Genoese-style miracle of an averted shipwreck comes from the standard biography by Thomas Agni.⁹¹ What we learn about Jacopo

89. *LA*, 421–38, a chapter as long as the one on Francis. This edition also includes the lengthy bull of canonization appearing in some manuscripts. In general, see Donald S. Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor: The Life and Cult of Peter of Verona (†1252)* (Aldershot, 2008), with ample notices of Jacopo, 177–80 for this life.

90. *LA*, 421.

91. *LA*, 430.

from his account of this most important early Dominican saint after the founder is how reluctant Jacopo was to introduce his own firsthand information about a topic he surely knew well. Instead, he faithfully reproduced his written sources, with one notable omission. Peter's killer, Carino of Balsamo (†1293), repented his deed and heresy and became a lay penitent in a Dominican convent at Forlì.⁹² Contemporary martyrdoms were rare enough, and almost never was the killer known by name, but Jacopo does not mention him or his fate. As far as he knew, perhaps Carino simply disappeared from historical view and passed the last forty-odd years of his life in obscurity on the other side of Italy. Or, more likely, Jacopo knew exactly who he was but did not think a saint's life was an appropriate place to preserve the name of a notorious murderer, however repentant.

Elizabeth of Hungary (November 19)

Elizabeth (1207–31) was a model saint: the holy noble woman, the daughter of the king of Hungary, an exemplary wife dying very young. Jacopo had at his disposal a long biography as well as two collections of miracles, so most of his work in this chapter was reshaping sources and summarizing them.⁹³ Much of the chapter is a list of posthumous miracles. Since Elizabeth was one of the four saints from Jacopo's century to be included in his collection, we should look for reasons why he decided she merited such notice. Since he never states these reasons, we must cautiously infer them as part of the task of understanding how he thought.

First, Elizabeth was a daughter of a king and married to Ludwig, landgrave of Thuringia, making her an important member of the nobility at a time when male members of this class certainly dominated the ranks of contemporary saints.⁹⁴ Her piety, her rigorous asceticism, and especially her devotion to Mary and her similarities to Martha made her an ideal role model for women of her class, in the eyes of male members of the clergy. The noble women of Liguria, particularly in Genoa, controlled

92. For details on this fascinating person, eventually beatified, see Donald S. Prudlo, "The Assassin-Saint: The Life and Cult of Carino of Balsamo," *Catholic Historical Review* 95 (2008): 11. Documents in the contemporary process of Anthony's canonization mention a group but only name Carino as the killer. Carino was no saint.

93. *LA*, 1156–79, a long chapter.

94. See Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society* (Chicago, 1982), 197, for a table showing titled nobility still a major component of thirteenth-century saints; 221 and elsewhere, titled noble women were a small minority of noble saints—hence possibly Jacopo's interest in Elizabeth.

much wealth and could influence events, as in the case of their collective role in urging men to go on the Fifth Crusade.⁹⁵ Elizabeth encouraged her husband to go to the Holy Land on crusade, where he died and left her a young childless widow, increasingly under the stern supervision of a male spiritual director.

The central focus of Elizabeth's piety was an abiding love for the poor and the sick. Jacopo shared these sentiments, and he stresses Elizabeth's many charitable activities, as well as her humility. What he mentions only briefly is that after her husband's death, Elizabeth went every morning to the Franciscans to have a *Te Deum* sung and to thank God for her tribulations.⁹⁶ This is as close as Jacopo comes to Elizabeth's intimate association with the Friars Minor, with whom she was associated as a lay tertiary. Elizabeth was an important early friend to the Franciscans in Germany, and her life resembled St. Francis's, especially in her ascetic privations and care for lepers and the poor. Jacopo, as a Dominican, was attracted to voluntary poverty, especially when people with wealth and position to renounce, like Elizabeth, heeded the call. Everything about Elizabeth's life, even her childless marriage, resonated with the way Jacopo saw the world and the circumstances of women. Bartholomew of Trent was also interested in this saint, but he says nothing at all about the Franciscans. He also notes more historical details, including the fact that Emperor Frederick II was especially devoted to Elizabeth's memory.⁹⁷ This emperor was a bitter enemy of Genoa and the Ligurian Pope Innocent IV and would find no favorable mention in any of Jacopo's works. Jacopo showed his respect for noble sanctity, even in a woman.

Clues about Jacopo's Thinking

Besides the chapters we have considered as units, there are many smaller items revealing the ways Jacopo's mind worked through questions and issues that concerned him. This chapter concludes with a look not at feasts or saints but subjects, in this order: *varia*, places, miracles, faces, women, disasters, and Jacopo as a writer and as a historian. This last issue provides a good transition to his great chronicle.

95. James M. Powell, *The Anatomy of a Crusade* (Philadelphia, 1986), 105, n. 38.

96. *LA*, 1164: "Hora vero matutinali ad domum fratrum minorum pergens rogavit ut pro sua tribulatione deo gratias agerent et 'Te deum laudamus' cantarent."

97. *BdeT*, 344–45.

Varia

This section gathers together a heterogeneous assortment of Jacopo's work, not because there is a thread connecting them, but rather that collectively they illuminate his view of the world. The chapter on St. Jerome is an oddity, partly because his career and personality were not typically saintly, but also because all the people telling the story of his life were hard pressed to come up with any miracles or even much devotion to him as an intercessor of any kind.⁹⁸ Jerome was a model of a certain type of scholarly life, one Jacopo did not emulate, but one that surely interested him. Jacopo cites Isidore of Seville as his authority that Jerome knew three languages extremely well, and Sulpicius Severus, called a contemporary of Jerome, also praised his Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Jacopo, like nearly all western theologians of his day, knew only one of these languages, and felt his inability to read Greek.⁹⁹

In his chapter on Saints Cosmas and Damian, Jacopo retells an old and well-known story about a man in Rome suffering from a cancer that destroyed one of his legs.¹⁰⁰ He prayed to these saints, and one advised getting a new leg, while the other told him of an Ethiopian who had been recently buried in a nearby cemetery. The sufferer retrieved the leg, and the saintly physicians grafted it on in place of his cancerous flesh and he was made whole. The proof of all this was that this man now had a Moor's leg, presumably darker than the rest of him and visible proof of the miracle. Jacopo absorbed from all the old Christian stories, especially those from Egypt, a lot of color symbolism about people who were black and white, and almost invariably to look like an Ethiopian was to resemble the devil, who often appeared in that guise. Jacopo was quite at ease in classifying people according to skin color, certainly a skill others applied to slave trading in Liguria, one attribute of their faces, about which more below.

St. Felix, pope at the time of Emperor Constantius in the fourth century, was martyred for his opposition to the emperor's heretical Arianism, shared by Pope Liberius.¹⁰¹ Even if Liberius lived nine centuries ago and was installed as pope by a secular ruler, the episode had demoralizing parallels to the situation of a recent emperor often viewed as a heretic, Frederick II, and the heroic pope he hounded out of Italy, Innocent IV. Another sign of

98. *LA*, 1002–9, an average-sized entry. As a scholar, 1009.

99. *BdeT*, 301, claims for Jerome knowledge of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Chaldean (possibly Syriac). John of Beleth, like Jacopo, notes only the big three, *JdeB*, 41.

100. *LA*, 980–81; the word used to describe the operation of the saints is “*inserverunt*,” implying some sort of graft.

101. *LA*, 681, among the shortest of chapters, another sign of Jacopo's discomfort?

how the past could be influencing Jacopo is how he treats the name and life of St. James the Apostle.¹⁰² To make a long story short, Jacopo knows that teachings vary about whether or not this person was actually Jesus' brother in fact or in spirit. Jacopo tellingly notes an odd piece of information that for Jews brothers come from the same womb, a clue which side Jacopo actually believes. Jacopo likes the facts that this James was said to be the first apostle to celebrate mass in Jerusalem, that he was a stalwart proponent of virginity, that he was bishop for thirty years, and that he was martyred under Nero. It seems to me that Jacopo, as a priest, identifies with the saint that was his namesake, and he must have been especially struck by the later parallel when he became an archbishop. Jacopo's sermons on James are unusually detailed, and he claims James was one of the first apostles to die.¹⁰³

In his chapter on St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre at the time of Attila (yet dying around 430), Jacopo draws from his sources a curious miracle by this saint.¹⁰⁴ Inconvenienced by the death of his donkey, he brought it back to life. This is an odd miracle, and when we explore in detail Jacopo's stance toward the miraculous, we will have a better context for evaluating it. The miracle deserves notice here because Jacopo chose to repeat this story, even though it evoked very different values from the church Jacopo served. Finally, the life of St. Nicholas gave Jacopo the occasion to note some miracles much closer to his own time.¹⁰⁵ Because the Turks had destroyed Nicholas's ancient city and burial place at Myra in Asia Minor in 1087, a group of warriors from Bari had brought his bones to their home city. Here these relics prompted the miraculous conversions of Jews, plausible in a southern Italian milieu where they lived, unlike Jacopo's Liguria. Jacopo's sermons and the *Legenda Aurea* were filled with references to Jews, almost all of them, as we have seen, very negative.¹⁰⁶ Jacopo did not know their language, and he seems to be more favorably disposed even to the people he variously refers to as Saracens or Hagarenes (he knew Turks were another people). His hostility toward Jews seems to be solely on religious grounds, and he reserves for darker peoples any opinions that might be regarded as protoracist at best.

102. *LA*, 446–58, a longish chapter; the etymology is on 446 and derives mainly from Uguccione da Pisa's *Agiografia*, ed. Giuseppe Cremonesi (Spoleto, 1978), 158, but greatly expands on it.

103. *SS*, 273v.

104. *LA*, 689–94.

105. *LA*, 38–48, miracles concerning Jews (44–46) drawn from a variety of sources, including *BdeT*, 22–25, but shorter there.

106. Again as a contrast, in Federico Visconti's 106 sermons he does not mention Jews or Hebrews at all, not even Pharisees, directly or as themes.

Jacopo's World

It is possible, but risky, to reconstruct Jacopo's gaze or comprehension of the wider world around him. So rarely does he mention himself that we would be hard pressed to find anywhere he had with certainty visited except nearby Pavia. Yet we know from his extensive journeys as a Dominican that he was a typical Genoese traveler. What we can find is Jacopo's gaze on his world, the places interesting or important to him whether or not he had ever visited them. It is best to start with Genoa because we know Jacopo knew this city well, and it receives a fair amount of notice in *The Golden Legend*, though not so much as that we would immediately assume he knew it well. We have already seen that Genoa's claim to have the bones of John the Baptist figured prominently in Jacopo's chapter on the beheading of that saint. Jacopo seems proud to point out that Popes Alexander III and Innocent IV had recognized the truth of this and granted privileges to Genoa.¹⁰⁷ Jacopo also has a chapter on St. Siro, third bishop of Genoa back in Roman times. He has little specific information on this person and seems to be drawing on his own imagination and local traditions.¹⁰⁸ Jacopo has so few details on his career that he was forced to recount the miracle by which Siro used his spit to bring his pet bird back to life. Though little sense of Roman Genoa emerges from this chapter, Jacopo referred to Siro as a holy father and our patron, revealing that Jacopo identified with the diocese of Genoa, if not at this stage of his career with the city itself.¹⁰⁹

Two other saints mattered in Genoa. The cathedral was dedicated to San Lorenzo, and Jacopo's chapter on St. Lawrence utilized Bartholomew of Trent and John of Belet, as well as other sources, to tell the story of this heroic third-century martyr.¹¹⁰ Much of this chapter is a learned historical discourse on the date of Lawrence's death and will be considered later when we evaluate Jacopo as a historian. The original cathedral of Genoa had been a church dedicated to San Siro, but later the cathedral of San Lorenzo was built and became the bishop's and later the archbishop's seat. The problem was that

107. *LA*, 873–85, here 877.

108. *LA*, 600–10; the editor could find no sources, and Bartholomew of Trent does not include this saint in his book. See also *LA2*, 1579–81, for comments on Genoa, and xxxiv that this life was added during Jacopo's revisions.

109. *LA*, 610: "patronus noster."

110. *LA*, 754–73, a long entry. *BdeT*, 222–28, has for him a very long section emphasizing the Roman martyrdom and some recent miracles by this saint around Trent, but nothing on Genoa. *JdeB*, cap. 145, pp. 280–81, has a brief account, also skipping Genoa, and more on the liturgy of his feast day.

Jacopo could find no connection between this saint (or even his relics) and Genoa. Since he had traveled from Spain to his Roman martyrdom, local traditions presumed, plausibly, a stopover in Genoa. So scrupulous is Jacopo as a hagiographer that he does not mention this possibility. Genoa shared with many places in Europe a devotion to St. George, whose martial qualities made him an ideal patron saint for this feisty city. His red cross became the most common symbol of the Genoese state, and for a long time the Casa San Giorgio was in effect city hall and later the home of the famous bank of the same name. Jacopo's chapter on George draws on many sources, highlights the famous encounter with the dragon, and concludes with a rare notice of the First Crusade with George's appearance at the siege of Antioch.¹¹¹ Again, Jacopo had no reason to mention Genoa in this chapter, and he did not. Later, when he was the city's archbishop, San Giorgio would have been unavoidable.

The long chapter on St. Ambrose gives a good sense of the expected importance of Milan as the context for his career (as it was also for Jacopo's).¹¹² This emphasis probably derives from the good sources Jacopo deploys in this chapter, though Jacopo knew Lombardy well and there is a sense of place in this chapter. Farther afield, the chapter on St. James gave Jacopo the chance to explain how his body was moved to Spain.¹¹³ Given the details of James's life, it is perhaps not surprising that Jacopo evinces no engagement with Spain here and Campostella is merely a name. Jacopo was completely uninterested in the Egyptian context of the life of St. John the Almoner, just before the Muslim conquest.¹¹⁴ The life of St. Bartholomew gave every one of this apostle's hagiographers the opportunity to describe his mission to India, and Jacopo was duly but not excessively drawn to this locale, which naturally he knew only from books.¹¹⁵ More important to Jacopo was the story of how Bartholomew's body ended up at Lipari, a small island off the Sicilian coast, which Jacopo has invaded by Saracens in the year 331.¹¹⁶ Jacopo also knows that the body was hence moved to

111. *LA*, 391–98.

112. *LA*, 378–90.

113. *LA*, 650–62, drawing heavily on John of Belet (JdeB, cap. 124, pp. 238–39), who was interested in this saint and distinguishes all the St. Jameses (Jacopos), a subject naturally important to our Jacopo.

114. *LA*, 188–97.

115. *LA*, 830–40, short for an apostle.

116. *LA*, 835. A missing D could make this 831; 931 would be more likely. BdeT, 252–55, has an entry that seems to be a source for Jacopo, and one version of his book has the same Lipari story. He also has (255) an old piece of historical lore that he credits to Jerome: Bartholomew translated Matthew's gospel, written in Judea, into an Indian language—a detail Jacopo omits. Given his interest in languages, this is another sign that India meant little to Jacopo.

Benevento for safety, and the Romans claim it was later translated to their city. In any case Jacopo notes that at the time Emperor Frederick II sacked Benevento the saint intervened on the city's behalf. Jacopo's gaze quickly returned to a familiar Italian milieu and favorite villain.

The broad but rather vague perspective Jacopo had on the wider world is perhaps not surprising in a collection intended for an audience of clerics across Europe. It is hard to find anywhere other than Italy that attracted Jacopo, and he seems bored by Northern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. Jacopo did not pause for local details the way Bartholomew frequently did for his Trent, and this may be one of the reasons why *The Golden Legend* enjoyed such popularity across Christian Europe.

Miracles

This topic, so prominent in Jacopo's collection, deserves an extended analysis in its own right, if this were a study of Jacopo and the miraculous—a major theme of nearly every chapter. The *Legenda Aurea* takes for granted a way of thinking about miracles that comes out more directly in some of Jacopo's sermons. Jacopo understood that miracles were signs, and it made sense to him that they were more common in the early, primitive church, when so many unbelievers needed signs.¹¹⁷ The miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand was of course rare in its magnitude, but it was not as great as ruling the world.¹¹⁸ For Jacopo the entire world, or nature under God, was a miracle. He distinguishes a miracle made through nature and skill as the way God works through the prayers and requests of holy people from what he calls "alchemical gold" (*aurum alchemicum*) made by the skill of man. (It is revealing that Jacopo admits the power of alchemy.) Apparent reversals of natural law were within the capacity of humans, but they did not rank with the divine power necessary to accomplish a true miracle. Jacopo knew that miracles came from God and not the saint and certainly not the alchemist.

Since our concern is the smaller question of how Jacopo's mind worked, we can use this vast subject to see that mind in action. The chapter on St. Andrew the Apostle provides two good examples.¹¹⁹ First, a Christian youth secretly approached Andrew with the problem that his beautiful

117. SQ, no. 210, p. 77.

118. SQ, no. 245, pp. 267–99, for this and what follows.

119. LA, 24–37; 27 for the thunder story from Vincent of Beauvais, and 35 for the faces, also an old observation, but repeated here with emphasis.

mother was trying to lure him into an illicit act, presumably incest. Upon his refusal the mother accused her son of trying to violate her. Andrew appeared in the son's defense, who was condemned to a horrible punishment for this exceptional (attempted) crime but was saved by Andrew from this fate. Andrew punished the mother by first causing an earthquake and thunder that made everyone prostrate on the ground, and then having the evil mother struck and destroyed by lightning. Jacopo highlighted this miracle because he was able to include some dialogue between the saint and the woman, something he tried to do whenever possible. Besides the usual healings and other manifestations of sanctity in nearly every saint's life, this miracle was in the smaller class of those actively fighting the devil.

Set in the frame of a longer miracle story, Jacopo included the answer to a question posed to a traveling holy man by a saintly woman: what was the greatest miracle of God in a small thing? His reply was "the variety and excellence of faces," explained as meaning that since the beginning of the world there had been so many people, and one could not find two sharing a completely similar face (identical twins were another matter). In brief, Jacopo saw the miraculous in every facet of the world, from the beginning of time to his own day. The last episode is a clue to look more closely at what he found in the human face.

Faces

I have explored elsewhere Jacopo's keen interest in physiognomy, especially in color symbolism and eyes, and need not repeat that extended analysis here.¹²⁰ Like many of his contemporaries, Jacopo shared the belief that the findings of physiognomy were valid, that one could deduce temperaments and other important characteristics about people from their physical appearances, especially their faces. As one example among many, Jacopo derives from his sources this portrait of St. Bartholomew: black curly hair, white skin, big eyes, an exactly balanced nose, a full beard having few gray hairs, an equable height.¹²¹ This same principle applied to holy people, and even the faces angels assumed. Sometimes these overlapped, as in the case of Stephen the protomartyr, who is twice described simply as having an angelic face, as are others.¹²² The function

120. Epstein, *Purity Lost*, 178–80.

121. *LA*, 831: "Capilli eius nigri et crispi, caro candida, oculi grandes, nares equales et directe, barba proluxa habens canos paucos, statura equalis." Admittedly the description comes from a demon, but all the qualities are good ones by the canons of physiognomy. For a description of St. Mark, see earlier in this chapter; saints should share the best traits.

122. *LA*, 78–86, here 79 and 80.

of a holy face was to terrify the wicked, a beautiful face often tempted the saintly, and wicked or weird features warned people of evil. Jacopo accepted the truths of physiognomy and repeated good physical descriptions he found in his sources, especially those about the saints of the early church. Nevertheless, he did not include any physical descriptions in the chapters on the saints close to his own lifetime. This suggests that he did not believe they were all that important compared to the lives and miracles of the saints.

Women

The *Legenda Aurea* contains 178 chapters in the modern edition of which twenty-four are on female saints and three on Mary, making women 15.2 percent of the saints.¹²³ The great survey of Weinstein and Bell (comprising 864 saints but not using Jacopo as a source) counted 17.5 percent as women and noted that the percentage was on the rise from the thirteenth century, when women comprised 22.6 percent of their sample.¹²⁴ Since Jacopo's sample was heavily skewed toward the early church when women saints were prominent, his portrait of sanctity is different since he found no female saint to commemorate during the many centuries between the sixth and the thirteenth, except for Elizabeth at the end, who hence accounted for 25 percent of his sample for that century. As we have seen, Mary was especially important to Jacopo, as were her holy days, and she embodied all the best traits a woman could have. Jacopo's sermons had provided many ways for him to comment on the circumstances of women, so he did not need the saints' lives as a venue for his opinions on them.

Martha's story enabled Jacopo to clarify his view that this woman was the sister of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, and she was the anonymous woman cured from an effusion of blood.¹²⁵ Jacopo knew the story of how Martha's body ended up in Tarascon and was venerated there, and that her servant/slave Marcella went to evangelize Slavonia (the Adriatic coast opposite Italy). Marcella did not merit a life, but Jacopo certainly appreciated that women were not ordinarily preachers and evangelists in the thirteenth century. St. Thais was a reformed prostitute in Roman Egypt, but Jacopo has nothing beyond the ancient sources for her life and misses the chance to comment on prostitution in his own time.¹²⁶

123. Chapter 60 is about an anonymous virgin of Antioch, treated as one saint. Chapter 154 is on the 11,000 virgins, counted as one saint. The figures exclude mixed pairs, and though we would view a feast like All Souls as gender neutral, probably Jacopo did not think that way.

124. Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, 220.

125. *LA*, 683–87, on the brief side.

126. *LA*, 1038–40.

St. Catherine's ancient *Passion* was the main source for the martyrdom of this third-century Egyptian saint.¹²⁷ Her story gave Jacopo the chance to supply five reasons, apparently original to him, why she was admirable and hence a way for us to see how he understands women. Jacopo draws attention to Catherine's wisdom, eloquence, constancy, chastity, and dignity; these qualities appeared in her vigorous defense of Christianity at her trial. In his way Jacopo tells us that Catherine was wise in her philosophy, which is divided into three types, theory, practice, and logic, with theory divided into three categories: intellectual, natural, and mathematical. (Jacopo is drawing on his memory of Boethius, whom he names.)¹²⁸ Catherine was wise intellectually in her understanding of the Christian religion (*divinorum*) and eloquent in her responses to pagan rhetoricians. She was naturally wise in her answers to the emperor, and wise mathematically in her contempt of worldly things. (Jacopo knows almost nothing about numbers.) He goes on to divide the practice of philosophy into three classes: ethics, *economica*, and public or political. The middle one has to do with family matters and hence the household (a sound understanding of the ancient word), and Catherine was active in the public sphere as she sought to instruct the city rulers in Alexandria. Jacopo goes on to explore further Catherine's excellence of mind, down to her use of complicated rules of rhetoric and dialectic. In detail he has borrowed these distinctions from Boethius, who had no trouble envisioning philosophy as a woman (as the book of Proverbs personifies Wisdom). Nonetheless, Jacopo has applied the full range of these skills to an actual woman who was a martyr and saint and whose life embodied practical skills in politics and household management as well as all the forms of wisdom in philosophy. Although it is true that Jacopo took this approach to a woman in the distant past, and that he portrayed the sanctity of Elizabeth as basically spiritual and by no means intellectual, I think it is fair to say that Jacopo accepted the patriarchal church and society in which he lived, but he was by no means a complete misogynist, as were many of his clerical contemporaries.

Disasters and Plague

Jacopo died about fifty years before the arrival of bubonic plague in Europe, and it is a mistake to read what he writes about epidemics in light of what we

127. *LA*, 1205–15; 1213–15 for his own views summarized here.

128. Maggioni in *LA2*, 1359, cites Boethius as the source, but in fact the commonplace “*formas sine materia*” appears in many authors: Aquinas, Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, Raymond Lull, often citing Boethius; Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed December 26, 2013.

know happened later. Instead, we must keep in mind that Jacopo lived his adult years in a medieval Europe (and Genoa) at the peak of its prosperity, with low levels of natural disasters and disease. Yet memories of past disasters were part of Jacopo's intellectual context, and he certainly thought about and contributed to contemporary thinking about Providence.¹²⁹ Michael the Archangel helped to fight an epidemic in sixth-century Italy, and since then God's plan had not included a general calamity for Europe, though its peoples had reason to doubt that their prayers were the main explanation for this result.

Jacopo inherited a long tradition of interest in the martyrdom of Sebastian in the time of Emperor Diocletian.¹³⁰ The first effort to kill this saint was by archery, and he was so filled with arrows that he looked like a hedgehog.¹³¹ Sebastian was later scourged to death, and his cult developed in a normal way in the fourth and fifth centuries. Jacopo learned from Paul the Deacon that in the sixth century a terrible plague struck all of Italy, with very high levels of mortality in Rome and Pavia. A good angel (presumably Michael but not named here) led the response to the plague, but then it was revealed that the plague would not cease until an altar was dedicated to Sebastian at Pavia, and one was also built in Rome at the church of St. Peter in Chains. At once the plague stopped, and relics were sent out from Rome to other places, presumably because of a growing belief that Sebastian averted plague. This story became even more famous in the *Legenda Aurea* and was waiting for when Europe would need Sebastian and revere him even more desperately in the next century. Jacopo did not know how Sebastian became a saint whose intercession mattered at a time of plague; this had happened long ago. Some later historians have supposed that Sebastian seemed a good saint to fight the plague because contemporaries envisioned the disease as an invisible arrow striking some and not others, so who could be more useful than a saint filled with arrows.¹³² Jacopo was unlikely to believe so literal a connection between the style of martyrdom and the saint's effectiveness. The connection had somehow been made as many centuries ago from Jacopo as he is from us.

As we will see when we look at Jacopo as a historian, the chapter on St. Pelagius (556–61), a predecessor of Gregory the Great, allowed Jacopo

129. For more on this general theme, see Epstein, *Medieval Discovery of Nature*, 148–84.

130. *LA*, 162–68, for what follows.

131. *BdeT*, 57–60, but nothing on the plague mentioned below.

132. For more on plague's arrows, see Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe* (London, 2002), cover, miracles on 71–81, Sebastian on 74.

to provide a rapid and highly selective survey of European history from the sixth century to sometime between 1250 and 1273.¹³³ Between two events, the conversion of the Bulgarians (863) and the reign of Otto I (dated 938 by Jacopo), he lists a series of natural disasters in what we may call his Tenth-Century Crisis.¹³⁴ At Brescia in Italy blood rained from the sky for three days and nights. Around the same time Gaul experienced a remarkable plague of locusts in huge swarms devastating plants and trees. The ensuing mortality and famine caused the death of about one third of the population, whether or not limited to Gaul Jacopo does not say. But he deserves credit for noticing these catastrophes as a part of human history, and in this context he mentions nothing about any prayers or saintly intercession, as he described the beneficial effects of processing in Genoa with the bones of John the Baptist. Jacopo does not interpret these disasters, though by placing them between the end of the Carolingian dynasty and the rise of the Ottonians, he may be suggesting that they presaged great changes in this world.

Jacopo as Writer and Historian

Jacopo's main task as a hagiographer was to compress and abbreviate the massive number of sources at his disposal. Alain Boureau calculated that Jacopo followed a single source for seventy-one of his chapters.¹³⁵ This means that much of the *Legenda Aurea* consists of direct quotations from other writers, lightly rewritten or directly borrowed by Jacopo. This fact has led us to look most closely at the parts we can determine Jacopo wrote as most revealing of the ways his mind worked on historical problems. It is revealing that with one exception these matters of historical context all involve what for Jacopo (and us) is remote history. The one exception is a curious omission. One of the few chapters concerning a twelfth-century saint, Thomas of Canterbury (†1170, dated wrongly by Jacopo to 1174), relies on his standard authorities, but he excludes any mention of King Henry II, who was very hard to miss in this tragic murder.¹³⁶

133. *LA*, 1256–82. Apart from the final chapter on dedicating a church, this is the last one in the book and a good place for Jacopo to insert this material. Since he refers to the imperial throne as vacant, he implies these dates as the time of composition, probably toward the end of that period.

134. *LA*, 1274–75, following his sources Sigebert of Gembloux and Vincent of Beauvais.

135. Alain Boureau, *La Légende dorée: Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine (†1298)* (Paris, 1984), 88–89, is very strict in this analysis, as he does not count, for example, the chapter on Martin of Tours, even though nearly all of it comes from the biography by Sulpicius Severus.

136. *LA*, 103–7, rather brief; *BdeT*, 40–41, equally brief, found space to name Henry.

Jacopo was more at home in checking dates and historical accuracy for late antiquity than he was for the twelfth century when it came to the right date for Archbishop Thomas's murder. For the early church he had a few authoritative texts he could check against one another and use his skills as a reader to weigh and evaluate. For example, as we have seen, the long life of St. John the Evangelist provided Jacopo with various places to comment on the sources for Roman history from Tiberius to Domitian in the first century.¹³⁷ St. Denis, who died in Paris in the year 96, was in Jacopo's view the same Dionysius the Areopagite Paul had converted.¹³⁸ Jacopo cites an impressive array of authorities from the early church and Carolingian times to back this claim, which Jacopo considers uncontroversial. An event connecting Hilary of Poitiers to the pope Leo who lived in the time of Constantine led Jacopo to value the Tripartite History and Jerome over the older life of Hilary.¹³⁹ Jacopo includes a chapter on St. Julian, bishop of Le Mans, whom he believed to be, on the basis of an old life, the Simon whom Jesus cured of leprosy. What is important here is that Jacopo carefully distinguishes this Julian from the four others known to him, especially Julian the Apostate, who, Jacopo takes care to point out, was no saint.¹⁴⁰ Jacopo tells the engaging story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who were sealed in a cave to die of hunger but rose from the dead after 372 years and thought they had only slept for a night.¹⁴¹ Jacopo takes on good authority that the sleepers awakened in the thirtieth year of Emperor Theodosius II, which he remarkably dates to 448. Since they fell asleep in the time of Emperor Decius, who ruled for one year and three months in 252, they can only have been asleep for 196 years.¹⁴²

Finally, Jacopo has a case of conflicting authorities concerning the martyrdom of St. Lawrence and his companion Vincent.¹⁴³ John of Belet dated

137. *LA*, 471–72; in a brief chapter on St. John before the Latin Gate (which does not mention the gate) Jacopo cites the church history by Eusebius, Orosius, and John of Belet.

138. *LA*, 1041–50.

139. *LA*, 148, concerning the rising from the dead of the pope, an event Jacopo was sure Casiodorus would have mentioned.

140. *LA*, 209–17, and in fact the emperor receives nearly as many lines in this chapter as the saint. *JdeB*, cap. 125, pp. 240–41, Jacopo's source here, also carefully notes the various Julians.

141. *LA*, 670–75, an important chapter to Jacopo because he wanted to emphasize the reality of the resurrection of the dead and the heresy to believe otherwise. *BdeT*, 161–62, has a shorter account with no worries about chronology.

142. *LA*, 675; Jacopo follows in the footsteps of Jean de Mailly here, but the interest in chronology is his own.

143. *LA*, 754–73, here 755. Lawrence's companion Vincent was martyred at a different time and place.

the martyrdom to the reign of Decius, but Vincent was said to be a young man in the time of Diocletian. What bothers Jacopo is that more than forty years separated Decius and Diocletian, and the reigns of seven emperors, so it was impossible for Vincent to be young when he died. This is Jacopo's historical research, sandwiched in between the reasoning of Beletth and Vincent of Beauvais on the reign of the previous emperor, Philip I (244–49), whom Jacopo believed, along with the best authorities, was the first emperor to become a Christian.¹⁴⁴ These examples show how Jacopo carefully sifted the evidence on the church, especially in the periods of persecution, but this diligence did not always guarantee accurate dates.

The martyrdom of the obscure St. Secundus was important to Jacopo because it occurred in Asti, and the saint's life involved a trip to Milan and the contemporary imprisonment of Marcian in nearby Tortona.¹⁴⁵ Jacopo was interested in this northwest corner of Italy, which included Liguria and was important from Lombard times. As we have seen, the life of St. Pelagius provided Jacopo the occasion for inserting a great deal of information about the arrival of the Goths and Lombards into Italy.¹⁴⁶ Like many modern historians, Jacopo sees the sharp break between the ancient and his own world in these tumultuous sixth and early seventh centuries, which he tells as an Italian story without reference to Justinian or Belisarius. For Jacopo the decisive change was the rise of Islam. Before we turn to Jacopo as a historian, we should note some summary views derived from the *Legenda Aurea* about how his mind worked.

A few important signs of Jacopo's thinking emerge from this chapter. Jacopo shared widespread Dominican devotion to the earliest saints of the Christian church. Rome persecuted the early confessors and made martyrs. How the early church defeated paganism and transformed some ceremonies and extirpated others helped Jacopo to set the boundaries for what the church could and should accommodate. For example, keeping the torches and lights of early February to honor Mary seemed appropriate; a better

144. JdeB, cap. 145, pp. 280–81; same basic story about Lawrence and Vincent, but no mention of any emperors. BdeT, 222–28, who may be Jacopo's source on Phillip, has the major trial scene before Decius.

145. LA, 370–73, a single source chapter, from a *Passion*.

146. LA, 1256–82; for this early history 1256–62 and 1266–67, interrupted by an important account of Islam examined in the next chapter. The Lombard history in this life has been examined by Stefano Mula, "L'histoire des Lombards: Son rôle et son importance dans la *Legenda aurea*," in *De la sainteté à l'hagiographie: Genèse et usage de la Légende dorée*, ed. Barbara Fleith and Franco Morenzoni (Geneva, 2001), 75–95.

reason for celebrating August 1 than Actium seemed necessary. These lessons probably encouraged Jacopo (and others) to yield nothing to the thirteenth-century Cathars. One legacy of Christianity's first centuries was how to treat Jews and the holy scriptures. Jacopo had comparatively little use for Hebrew scripture except Psalms and the Wisdom books. His historical understanding of Jews absorbed the opinions of the early church fathers and became if anything even more harsh—and widely influential in *The Golden Legend*.

Hovering over everything he wrote about the saints was the continuous presence of Christ. Jacopo valued humility and avoided controversy. He shared the widespread clerical concerns about the problems of wealth and poverty and had little to reassure the materialists among his readers. He accepted the miraculous as a normal part of life, though he had very little direct experience with the supernatural. Content to repeat old miracle stories no matter how odd they might appear, he applied a higher standard of authority to those closer to his own time, as in the case of Francis. Nature had no special appeal to Jacopo, but he was able to find some animal behaviors natural enough for humans to emulate. He was certainly interested in disasters as portents and opportunities for miracles. Powerful intercessors like Mary or Michael could be approached through prayer, in the context of God's overall plan intending the best for people. Though sometimes inaccurate or hazy on dates, Jacopo had a keen sense of history and used the tools at his disposal to detect falsehood and illustrate the truth. These skills would come in handy when he became a historian.

CHAPTER 4

Genoa's Past

Jacopo da Varagine concluded the saints' lives of his *Golden Legend* with an entry on an obscure holy man of the sixth century, Pope Pelagius I (556–61). This life has almost nothing to say about Pelagius but is instead a long history essay in which Jacopo quickly summarizes western European history from the arrival of the Lombards in Italy to the empty imperial throne in the West, which dates this work to sometime after 1273.¹ Jacopo may have added this chapter when he had already been thinking about the great chronicle of Genoese history he would begin writing in the 1290s, and that is the main subject of this chapter. But his essay gives us the chance to see a historian in the making. He ended his collection of saints' lives in this way for a reason. Perhaps a foretaste of his later writing, it was also a window on how his mind worked, especially his reading habits and style of selecting some subjects and not others to record. As we will see, the chronicle of Genoese history is hardly a work of secular history. In fact Jacopo did not see the world conveniently divided into neat categories of sacred and secular history. Jacopo's biblical models for writing history, 1–4 Kings and 1–2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) as he called them, taught Jacopo how to sift multiple

1. *LA*, 1256–98.

sources and how to set down as few dates as possible. Harmonizing different accounts was one of the many lessons taught by the four Gospels. *The Golden Legend* had contained historical sketches where relevant concerning early medieval saints like Gregory the Great. But as the number of saints he wanted to write about thinned as he came closer to his own century, Jacopo presumably planned to give his readers an overall historical context in which to place the previous seven hundred years. What Jacopo thought was the minimum amount of contextual material required to understand the lives of the saints reveals what part of his own vast knowledge (or cultural bulimia, depending on one's point of view) he thought was the most important.² There are some amazing influences from the late thirteenth century that shaped Jacopo's perspective on the history of Western Christendom.

For anyone living in the Italian peninsula, the arrival of the Lombards and the decline of Byzantine control over large parts of Italy marked a decisive historical break. Jacopo had a good historical source, Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*, that along with other works provided a framework for these early medieval centuries. Almost immediately, however, Jacopo betrays second thoughts about what date should mark the beginning of his story and the context he was trying to evoke. Before the Lombards the Goths ruled Italy by imperial authority, even though they were Arian heretics. The Gothic king Theodoric is noted solely as the murderer of Boethius, an author Jacopo admired but who did not receive an entry of his own, though martyr he may have been, because he was not a saint. This is the first such pairing—an important secular ruler remembered because a great scholar flourished in his time. Then Jacopo decided to go back further in history, to follow the Arians back to fifth-century Gaul to provide a context for this heresy. Next he quickly resumed his theme of Lombard history with their famous leader Alboin, his unhappy wife Rosamund, and the famous cup he gave her, made from her father's skull.³ Eventually the Lombards became Catholic Christians in time for Gregory the Great to dedicate his *Dialogues* to Queen Theodelinda. Since Jacopo had written a long entry on Gregory, here he was able to pivot from a few interesting details on the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius in the East to the topic he thought was second in time to

2. "Cultural bulimia" is a judgment made on Jacopo as a reader (and writer) by Alain Boureau, *The Myth of Pope Joan*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago, 2001), 121. Boureau is a leading authority on Jacopo so this opinion is based on a deep familiarity with his writings and cannot be dismissed as hyperbole.

3. *LA*, 1258.

the Lombards and probably even more important in shaping the world he lived in—the rise of Islam and the life of Mohammad.

Jacopo's long and well-informed summary of early Islam is the highlight of this chapter.⁴ His views here carried great weight because of the many manuscripts of *The Golden Legend*. Jacopo begins by stating that around 610 Mohammad (always in Latin *Magumethus*, perhaps his own rendering), the pseudo-prophet and magus, deceived the Hagarenes or Ishmaelites, that is, the Saracens. Mohammad's alleged miseducation began with a disappointed Roman cleric who went east and filled Mohammad's head with nonsense. Even more literally, this cleric trained a dove to eat grain seeds out of Mohammed's ear, so he could soon claim that this bird was bringing religious revelations to him. Since Jacopo was well aware that Mohammed stated that the archangel Gabriel was his intermediary with God, this version of events squares that claim, the dove, and the Christian view that Mohammad was a fraud.⁵ Jacopo also notes another story that it was a runaway Nestorian monk named Sergius who taught Mohammad about religion and in particular from his heretical point of view that Christ was not God but a man, admittedly conceived by the Holy Spirit. What mattered to Jacopo were not so much these theological niceties as the concrete realities Mohammad introduced into the world. He knew that there was quickly a Muslim empire that spread so far to the east that it reached the frontiers of Alexander the Great's, and he knew very well that Islam also extended westward across Africa into Spain. Jacopo saw a connection between Muslims and Jewish practices like not eating pork, because after the Flood the pig spontaneously arose

4. *LA*, 1261–66, for this and what follows. Apart from a few details from Sigebert of Gembloux, Maggioni did not identify any sources for this section, and it must be based on Jacopo's wide experience and reading, perhaps Vincent of Beauvais and possibly including the Quran in Latin. Vincent provides long extracts from Hugh of Fleury, but these do not seem to me to have influenced what Jacopo presents: Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* (Strasbourg, 1473/74), 3: 39:40–67, pp. 172r–177v. Vincent organized these extracts by theme or topic. Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), 3–41, contains an excellent summary of the earliest western European knowledge of Islam; on Hugh of Fleury, 87. John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York, 2002), 22–64, presents a different point of view on the same topic; 233–55 are excellent on the broader Dominican encounter with Islam. Neither author mentions Jacopo, whose views are buried in an unexpected corner of *The Golden Legend*. This section has been well studied by Stefano Mula, "Muhammad and the Saints: The History of the Prophet in the *Golden Legend*," *Modern Philology* 101 (2003): 175–88.

5. Maggioni has identified Eulogius of Cordova (†859) as a possible source for this story. *LA2*, 1710. In my view he found it in an intermediary exemplum collection.

from camel dung.⁶ He saw, however, that Muslims agreed with Christians (Jews not mentioned here) that there was only one God, the creator of all.

Now we cannot be sure from the array of sources available to a thirteenth-century researcher which ones Jacopo actually read, because here he cites none by name. From this mass of information, lies, and legends, Jacopo put together his durable and well-known construction of Islam, which claimed to include actual quotations from the Quran.⁷ Let us not summarize all this, but instead focus on a few features of this portrait that fit with what we have seen, and will learn, about Jacopo's view of the world. The first point is that Jacopo devoted hundreds of words to Mohammad and Islam. Clearly he believed that this was very important, to understand both the past and the realities of the thirteenth-century Mediterranean world. Jacopo was very interested in the prophet's wife Khadiga (here *Cadigan*) and repeatedly mentions this wealthy widow. For a celibate Dominican well versed in his faith, and also deeply interested in the family as a moral unit, the existence of the holy prophet's wife was an anomaly attracting notice. Like many of his predecessors, Jacopo was drawn to the heretical monk Sergius as the instigator of Islam because it explained how Mohammad came to know so much about the Bible, Judaism, and above all Christianity, and even small details like Arab traditions about Friday in contrast to the Jewish and Christian Sabbaths.

As a priest and theologian Jacopo had a strong interest in the details of Islamic life. Even allowing for the general context of strong hostility to this religion, Jacopo was able to see in it some admirable qualities. Others were contrary to Christian teaching, but he was content to list them without constantly condemning them. For example, the first of Mohammad's laws he mentioned was how the Muslims scrupulously cleaned themselves before prayer.⁸ They pray to one God who has no equal and Mohammad is his prophet—not an idol or recipient of prayer. They fast for one month a year, during the day. The law permits Muslims to have up to four wives. The men may have as many captives and purchased female slaves (*emptitias*) as they

6. *LA*, 1262: "Quod ex fimo cameli porcus post diluuium fuerit procreates." The origin of this fanciful opinion may rest in Hugh of Fleury or Vincent of Beauvais; see Mula, "Muhammad and the Saints," 180. It is important that in this tradition the pigs did not make it onto the ark.

7. One, *LA*, 1262, is a legend about the child Jesus making birds from dust; another, *LA*, 1263, is a piece of biographical information in which Mohammad makes clear that he was an orphan who had fallen into idolatry. The first does not appear in the Quran but may be an echo from the so-called infancy gospel, which Jacopo knew. It is a fact that Mohammad was an orphan, but the Quran does not note this, not even in Sura 47.

8. *LA*, 1264–65, for this and what follows; one source is unknown, and the other is Sigebert.

want, and they can sell them if they are not pregnant. This is as close as Jacopo comes to recognizing the special standing of pregnant slave women and hence mothers in Muslim households, rules he knew very well did not apply in Genoa where wealthy men had the same free sexual access to slaves if not permission of the church (or their wives). Muslims fiercely punished adultery (by death) and fornication. They allow divorce and are ordered to abstain from wine. Jacopo describes in detail the delights of a Muslim paradise, where he knows the faithful are enjoined to eat and to drink in pleasure from the three rivers of milk, honey, and spiced wine. Those not believing in God or Mohammad will be consigned to eternal punishment. After following a source filled with details about Islamic beliefs and practices, Jacopo concluded this section by reiterating that Mohammad was (in his view) a false prophet who deluded the Saracens with his teaching. Jacopo's final word concerns the death of the prophet. In this account, some anonymous individuals attempted to kill Mohammad by placing some poisoned lamb before him. The lamb warned him not to eat, and he did not, but later he was poisoned anyway.⁹

The major themes from the rise of Islam to his own day, selected by Jacopo from his standard authorities, Sigebert of Gembloux, Martin of Troppau, and Vincent of Beauvais, demonstrate, as does the work of any historian, habits of selection in turn revealing what he thought was important to know. Many merchants from Genoa had visited the Muslim world from Fez in Morocco to Tabriz in Persia. Also, some slaves, Muslims or converts to Christianity, lived in Genoa, and Jacopo may have asked them some questions. He certainly knew a lot about Islam and keenly sensed its importance in his world. Once again, we must keep the intended audience—his fellow priests—in mind. The absence of any notice of Genoa here suggests that the audience he hoped for *The Golden Legend* was scattered across Europe. Another sign of this broad context is Jacopo's emphasis on the idea of a Roman emperor in the West from Charlemagne to Frederick II. Jacopo mentions every one of them, and usually some key episodes of their reigns. The selection of these details is the most revealing part of this essay.

As a scholar Jacopo was drawn to noticing important writers from the past, linked to the rulers: Charlemagne and Alcuin of York; Henry IV and Lanfranc of Bec and Anselm of Canterbury; Conrad II and Hugh of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Gilbert of Poirée; Frederick I and Peter Lombard. Since Jacopo viewed Henry VI as oppressing the church and Frederick

9. LA, 1266, source identified by Mula, "Muhammad and the Saints," 184, as Petrus Alfonsi. For more on this source the authority is Tolán, *Saracens*, 149–55.

II as a rightly excommunicated tyrant, he switches emphasis here to the papacies he thought significant—Innocent III, Gregory IX, Innocent IV. If we look back over this period for other noteworthy people and events, we find these: what we now summarize as the Investiture Contest in the papacy of Gregory VII, the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, the eighteen-year schism of the church in the twelfth century, the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, the founding of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the crusade of Albi (against the Cathars in Languedoc), and the final struggles between Frederick II and Innocent IV. Anyone who has ever taken or taught a survey of medieval Europe will recognize this familiar canon of settled opinion about what was important in political and church history, admittedly from an Italian and German perspective. Only Elizabeth seems to be a particular interest of Jacopo's, as we have seen in her long entry in *The Golden Legend*. But Jacopo saw this Roman Empire as the central fact of the political history of Europe; his survey mentions, for example, no rulers of England, France, or Castile, among others. After the Lombards nothing in Italy worth noting happened, which would have been news in places like Venice, Florence, and Genoa—none mentioned here, or the word “commune.” By omitting social and economic history here, Jacopo stood in a long tradition that prevailed in historical writing until very recently.

Jacopo inherited from his predecessors, ancient and medieval, the habit of recording natural disasters, which he usually did not interpret but left in his history as ominous signs of the times. He noted around 700 that grains and vegetables rained down on Campania; a huge earthquake occurred around 740; an evil spirit troubled Mainz around 856; not long after this blood rained down on Brescia and a great plague of locusts attacked Gaul, resulting in the death of one-third of the people; but then nothing down to his own time. Perhaps he had not yet read the city chronicles of Genoa, or local histories from many other places still filled with these types of notable catastrophes, as well as landslides, fires, volcanoes, famines, diseases, and other phenomena. Yet this historian was predisposed to notice what today we call environmental history, and we should be on the lookout for his attention to details about the region he knew best—his native Liguria.

By the time Jacopo resumed the thread of official Genoese history in the early 1290s, he had carefully read the work of his predecessors from Caffaro at the time of the First Crusade down to his contemporary Jacopo Doria, whose history most influenced his own. His chronicle benefits from a fine edition in Latin as well as an excellent translation into

Italian.¹⁰ Whether or not the commune formally appointed Jacopo an “official historian,” he certainly wrote Genoa’s history favoring the ruling elite. The most remarkable feature of his chronicle is how he departs radically from the annalistic format and its venerable traditions.¹¹ Rather than enter events into a year-by-year scheme so confining and distorting to matters stretching over several years, Jacopo organized his chronicle by twelve themes.¹² I do not think it is possible to overemphasize the originality of this plan, which seems to be Jacopo’s own and was his most important decision as a historian. As the hagiographer and preacher we know Jacopo to have been, we should not be surprised that God’s plan for Creation, from the beginning to the present, hovers over Jacopo’s vision of the Genoese past. Here in brief are the twelve parts of his plan, a number auspicious for many biblical precedents.

1. The founding of Genoa
2. When Roman Genoa was founded
3. The philology of the ancient Latin word for the city—*Ianua*
4. Genoa’s conversion to Christianity
5. The history of the city to the Battle of Curzola (1298)¹³
6. Genoa’s government and morality
7. Advice on good government
8. Advice to citizens
9. Family life, women, and slaves
10. Church history
- 11 and 12. Bishops and archbishops of Genoa

Anyone who has read history will be struck by the scope and ambition of this project. Many universal or even local histories went back to Creation or

10. For the text, see CG, and Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca della città di Genova dalle origini al 1297*, ed. and trans. Stefania Bertini Guidetti (Genoa, 1995). Monleone has a full critical apparatus and many learned notes on Jacopo’s sources and errors. Bertini Guidetti prints his Latin text, her own translation, some of the notes, and valuable new information on editions of sources not available or known to Monleone in the 1930s.

11. See Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981), 9–15, for some astute comments on the strengths and limitations of the annalistic format. See *ibid.*, 60–62, for the Genoese tradition and some mixed assessments of Varagine. See also Ronald G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2012), 442–46, for the communal historians before Jacopo Doria.

12. CG, 21–28; all references to the chronicle that follow are to the second volume.

13. This last matter an addition by an anonymous continuator of the chronicle.

some mythic event in the distant past, and Jacopo was not above considering the various myths of Genoa's founding, some inevitably tied to the Trojans. His predecessor Jacopo Doria had gathered up the few surviving scraps concerning Roman Genoa, principally from Livy, but as we will see, Jacopo filled in the gaps with some astute observations about the significance of Genoa's physical setting as a port. It is not surprising to see a close student of Isidore of Seville and dictionaries pay attention to the origins of the Latin word for his city and its possible meanings. Nor should its conversion escape the notice of a Dominican priest. The fifth section on Genoese history reveals how Jacopo selected some details (and not others) from his distinguished predecessors and provided his own sense of the city's history in his own times from the end of Doria's chronicle (1293) to the city's perfection around 1295. Jacopo's historical reasoning appears in his attitude toward gaps in the record, like bishops who were only names.¹⁴ He filled the gap with something at hand, however irrelevant it may have been. His triumphalist account of Genoese history here is at its most conventional and annalistic but eerily agrees with many modern historians of Genoa who also find that the 1290s witnessed the medieval height of the city's prosperity and population.

Jacopo's models were content to stop when they reached their own time, or ill health or death prevented any further labors. Instead, Jacopo wrote three chapters on good government and advice to citizens of a republic, drawing lessons from genres that had not been active since antiquity. As Genoa had no prince or king, the genre of handbooks for these rulers was useless to him, and it is to Jacopo's great credit that he recognized this and decided to write for citizens of a faction-ridden republic with a small empire, a topic not unfamiliar to someone who knew anything about ancient Rome. He conceived his chronicle as a modern *De Officiis*.

But then the preacher in Jacopo picked up two themes that had been for decades central to his sermons: the circumstances of women, and the importance of marriage to a stable society. These topics merit our close scrutiny in the next chapter for their astonishing originality, as does Jacopo's short but informative inquiry into the nature of slavery and relations between masters and slaves, topics very relevant to Genoese domestic life and its lucrative trade in slaves. Finally, Jacopo turned to a more familiar approach to history by pulling together its spiritual "dynasty" of bishops and archbishops from the earliest days of Christianity down to his own career. The conventional book-ends to this chronicle only highlight the path-breaking nature of its middle.

14. CG, 218.

Jacopo's use of sources across his works is important, and no book mattered more to him than the Bible. Stefania Bertini Guidetti counted up references to sources in the *Cronaca*, and we can examine them in this way:¹⁵

Table 4.1 Biblical and Classical Citations in *Cronaca*

OLD TESTAMENT		NEW TESTAMENT		OTHERS	
Pentateuch	11	Matthew	4	Augustine	27
Psalms	9	Luke	4	Jerome	10
Proverbs	25	John	2	Classical Authors	33
Wisdom	10	Paul's Letters	15	(Valerius Maximus)	(9)
Ecclesiasticus	27				

The patterns we saw in the sermons hold for this work as well. Keeping in mind that writing history was not the same as compiling a model sermon, we should still note Jacopo's lack of interest in Hebrew history or prophets and his preference for the wisdom literature, especially his favorite Ecclesiasticus. Once again he found no reason to cite Mark, but here he cited no letter by John either. Augustine remained his favorite author, and classical learning was at best a thin veneer to Jacopo's thinking, once more privileging Valerius Maximus as a storehouse of anecdotes.

Let us begin by looking closely at how Jacopo decided to introduce his history. Prologues give historians the opportunity to declare their purposes.¹⁶ They range from the terse to the verbose, but seldom stray from predictable sentiments about memories of the past, present needs, and hopes for the future. Jacopo had many examples before him of authors who introduced a chronicle or annals as not simply the continuation of some worthy predecessor.¹⁷ Livy's graceful preface largely rested upon the plausible assumption that the rise of Rome from nothing to everything was a uniquely important

15. Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 34–36, with the warning that biblical language so suffused Jacopo's prose that more allusions are probably there. There are many overlaps with the sermon collections and many citations to the previous Genoese annalists (102).

16. Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), 520, on the succinct model of Tacitus, of course unknown to Jacopo. Livy may be another matter. In general, see Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm, 1964), primarily concerned with classical authors.

17. Justin Lake, *Richer of Saint-Rémi: The Methods and Mentality of a Tenth-Century Historian* (Washington, D.C., 2013), 30–33, has some good insights on early medieval prologues. The useful collection *Les prologues médiévaux*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse (Turnhout, 2000) does not mention Jacopo, even in the chapter devoted to collections of saints' lives.

story.¹⁸ If Jacopo knew this work apart from excerpts from later historians, Rome was nevertheless no model for telling Genoa's history, no matter how much local patriotism might have thought Genoa equal to Rome. The stories were simply incomparable. Sicard, bishop of Cremona in the early thirteenth century, had introduced his chronicle (that began with Adam) with finely expressed views on the utility of history and his desire to move beyond the childish things of his youth (poetry and myth) to more solid matters of learning.¹⁹ Jacopo's near contemporary Vincent of Beauvais introduced his massive collection of excerpts by reasonably observing that the multitude of books, the brevity of time, and the vagaries of memory all justified his labors.²⁰ Martin of Troppau's plain preface modestly set the goal of describing the reigns of popes and emperors.²¹ After mentioning the four empires of Babylon, Carthage, Macedon, and Rome, he began in earnest with the founding of Rome, a chronology he was able to link to the reigns of the kings of Israel. The part of his plan that is most like Jacopo's concerns his topographical approach to the history of Rome. Martin proposed to describe the building of Rome, then its ports, palaces, temples, forms of government, and rulers. When Martin came to orderly lists of emperors and popes in late antiquity his work fell into a predictable pattern. But Jacopo may owe his departure from the strict annalistic format to seeing Genoese history as broken into episcopacies. Also, Jacopo had a strong interest in Genoa's physical setting in northwestern Italy, easier for him to see in his home town where he spent much of his life than for Martin, who had to imagine ancient Rome from the wreckage of the present.

Right before Jacopo's eyes was the wonderful chronicle of his immediate predecessor Jacopo Doria, who wrote the city's history as annals from 1280 to 1293.²² Doria introduced his work with one splendid sentence on how useful it was to write about the past and the present, so that they would not

18. Titus Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1965), *praefatio*.

19. Sicard of Cremona, *Cronica*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptorum 31 (Hannover, 1903), 78.

20. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, 1, a work Jacopo knew, but this introduction was no model for him—especially with its apology for history and use of Daniel to justify an interest in secular and sacred history.

21. Martin of Troppau, *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH Scriptorum 22 (Hannover, 1872), 397–402, for the preface and plan of his work. For his influence on Dominicans, see M. Michèle Mulchahey, “*First the Bow Is Bent in Study*”: Dominican Education before 1500 (Toronto, 1998), 470–71.

22. Jacopo Doria, *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 5, 1280–1293, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Rome, 1929), 3–4. Doria knew he was in a long tradition going back to the beginning of Caffaro's chronicle in 1099, and he commented on the manuscript works of his predecessors.

be forgotten but also so that the past might be known to the future.²³ Doria was an eyewitness to the years he recorded, and he was close to the governments of his time. Hence his unusual stress on the present and the received tradition that the first job of the historian was to preserve the evidence of his own eyes. The well-educated Doria was, however, eager to find Genoa's history before Caffaro, to connect his city's story to the wider context of the past. So he became a true historian; he did research in a wide variety of written sources, and even some local oral lore. What he found were many writers and events, the basis for nearly everything Jacopo da Varagine knew about the early history of Genoa, yet one or two topics derived probably from his own work, *The Golden Legend*. This intertextuality between two contemporaries, Jacopo Doria and Jacopo da Varagine, who were part of the same intellectual community in Genoa and who undoubtedly knew one another, is not surprising. For convenience I have put Doria's findings under nine rubrics, so that they might be more easily understood as we see what Jacopo did with this material.²⁴

1. Vulgar opinion holds that the Trojans founded Genoa.
2. Livy—Doria discovered and inserts the four references to Genoa he found in the part of Livy's work concerning the Carthaginian wars.
3. Christianity arrives in Genoa, the story of Saints Nazarius and Cel-sus in the time of Nero (this from *LA*).
4. The Blessed martyr Fruttuosus matters at Capodimonte (the site of the Doria tombs).
5. What Paul the Deacon records about Genoa in the time of the Lom-bards (sixth century)
6. What Gregory the Great mentions about Genoa. What he mentions is left blank, a sign Doria did not recall exactly where the pope had written about the city or its bishop.
7. Charlemagne takes notice of Genoa around 780.
8. What the chronicle of Philibert (Sigebert of Gembloux) says about the sack of Genoa in 913 [*sic*]
9. For brevity, Doria has said enough, and he has nothing to add before beginning his account of the year 1280, except for Isidore of Seville's etymology of *Ianus*.

23. *Ibid.*, 3: "Quoniam multa et magna utilitas est preterita et presentia scribere, ne in futuris temporibus non solum oblivioni tradantur, set etiam per preterita cognoscantur futura, ideo ego. . ."

24. *Ibid.*, 4–8.

Though we have followed Jacopo through his sermons and lives of the saints and have come to know something of his ways, I think we should be startled by the fact that he begins his chronicle with the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30, not the variant in Luke 19:12–27).²⁵ It is some clue to Jacopo's intended audience that he did not need to spell out the contents of the parable, but they deserve a brief synopsis here. Jesus told a story about a master who entrusted wealth, five talents, two talents, and one talent, to three slaves/servants to employ in his absence. Upon returning he discovered that the first two good and faithful servants had doubled his wealth, while the timid, lazy third one had simply buried the talent for safekeeping. The further details and lesson of this parable need not trouble us for the moment, except to observe that the third servant had committed a grave error for which he would be severely punished, as his master knew he would have been better off depositing the money in a bank than with this person. Perhaps the commercial flavor of the story is one of the reasons it came to Jacopo's mind as the way to introduce his history.

One possible distraction needs to be set aside at once. Not until John Milton's remarkable sonnet "On His Blindness" from 1665, which also alludes to this parable, did the word "talent" in English come to mean more than an ancient measure of wealth, but a skill or aptitude. When Jacopo used the word it did not carry in his Latin these subsequent connotations (also unknown to the translators of the King James Bible). What Jacopo surely knew was the work of his fellow Dominican Giovanni Balbi, who had completed his great Latin dictionary, the *Catholicon*, in Genoa in 1286. This landmark of medieval Latinity supplied a definition of *talentum* as a varying measure of weight, here defined as seventy-two Roman pounds, but naturally yielding different values depending on which metal was being weighed.²⁶ In his way Balbi was not content to let it go at that, and what he writes next may be a clue to Jacopo's thinking about talents as an appropriate preface. Balbi cites Matthew 25 and finds an allegorical meaning to these talents in these metals: gold, silver, bronze, iron, and lead. These symbolize the five types of goods God gives to people. (Hence talent=metal=good, on the way to the modern meaning.) The good of Nature is to work, in incorruptible bronze. The good of Grace is gold, obviously the best because nothing else can be done without it. The good of Knowledge is silver to teach eloquence (a silver

25. CG, 3–4, for this and what follows.

26. Giovanni Balbi, *Catholicon* (Mainz, 1460), at *talentum*; entries in alphabetical order but not paginated by number.

tongue?). The good of Power is iron, clearly the strongest metal (as steel). The good of Wealth (*opulencia*) is lead, to serve as a reminder that temporal treasures rank far below spiritual ones. In brief the slave with five talents had them all, the one with two talents had bronze and some other talent, and the lazy person had only the talent of bronze, to work, which of course he failed to use.²⁷

Possibly Jacopo would have admitted to himself that he possessed all five of these “talents,” hence the strongest possible obligation to express them as a vigorous, spiritual worker/teacher of eloquence, all possible only through grace and not any merit of his own. Jacopo’s main point in using this parable is that one must put the (literal) talents to use. God rewards their use and punished the lazy slave who did not. So Jacopo believes that by God’s will, or at least with his permission, he has been called from the solitude of the cloister to the public palace, in other words from his place in the Dominican convent in Genoa to his palace of the archbishop. Nonetheless, not all of one’s time should be devoted to public issues or immersed in political questions. Jacopo was well aware of what the job of being archbishop of Genoa entailed, an important formative experience on how he thought about things in the last years of his life. Jacopo did not think it was wise to devote oneself to transitory things, but to do on this earth what will yield fruits in heaven as the Savior said in John 6:27.²⁸ So we should not occupy ourselves with food that perishes but with that which lasts into eternal life. Therefore Jacopo wants to do something useful that is pleasing in God’s eyes, to instruct and edify his readers and listeners. Jacopo does not see his endeavor as an exercise in worldliness. Far from it, and he also expects his work will be read aloud, in Latin, another hint of the intended audience.

At this point Jacopo pivots to the matter at hand, Genoa, and what about the city might edify anyone. Many (unnamed) cities in Italy make much of their antiquity, and so should Genoa.²⁹ Like Doria, Jacopo was living in an age when cities like Milan and Venice were certainly extolling their origins, and Rome’s were of course proverbial. Jacopo, having read Doria, knows there is not much written about Genoa, but his mind was not content to

27. The absence of a modern edition of the *Catholicon* makes it in practice very difficult to track down Balbi’s source here; all Isidore of Seville has is the talent as a varying measure of weight: *Etymologies*, 16.25.21.

28. Astonishingly, Jacopo did not cite this passage from John on working not for perishable food but for the food that endures for eternal life. Jacopo, however, used the same passage to introduce the *SD*.

29. *CG*, 5–6, for this and what follows.

note this but asked a deeper question: why was there so little to read about Genoa? The implicit assumption is that Genoa was one of the most important cities in the thirteenth-century Mediterranean world. Why was this not always so? Genoa started out poor and modest, and ancient writers were not interested in places like this.³⁰ Looking over chronicles and other works Jacopo found some things worthy of being recorded. Jacopo wanted to go back to the founding of the city and discover how it got its name, as well as learning about its forms of government and rulers. The purpose of these efforts was to instruct the citizens, a carefully chosen word excluding women, slaves, passing travelers, and the mere inhabitants of Genoa.

This investigation of Jacopo's mind through his history can take two paths: follow his plan through the twelve big topics as he sets them forth; or follow themes through the entire work that illuminate our subject. The first method would be best suited for a study of the chronicle per se. If we take this penultimate major project of Jacopo's as a guide to his mature thought, then a thematic approach seems best. After following Jacopo's creative work from his earliest sermons to this point, we can try to see the major themes as he saw them, not as our twenty-first-century preferences may suggest. We must remember that this work is a chronicle of Genoese history, and the city is usually at the center of Jacopo's attention.

Religion

Christianity matters everywhere in this chronicle, but what did it mean to Jacopo? On one level the answer to that question is simple: it meant everything to Jacopo, who saw the world through the lens of his faith. But what precisely was that faith? The cumulative weight of all of Christian doctrine, as contained in all the books Jacopo read, is not a helpful response. Where can we look to find the special meaning or importance Jacopo attached to faith? The transition from paganism to Christianity in Genoa is the place where Jacopo needed to explain the new faith as an event in history, and something needing definition. Before Christ the entire world worshipped idols and demons, and Isidore of Seville was Jacopo's main authority on pagan religion, a subject that did not much interest him.³¹ Jacopo knew the Bible well, and he had at his fingertips

30. CG, 4–5, worth citing the original: “ystoriographi autem, qui ab antiquo scripserunt, non currant de castris vel parvis terris quam facere mentionem, sed tantum civitates magnas et famosas.”

31. CG, 59–63.

its many references to idolatry, but that did not mean for him only the religious practices of the Greeks and Romans. Nor for that matter did Jacopo mention the Jews in this context as monotheists or as any part of the story of how Genoa became Christian. What is most important for Jacopo to prove was that Genoa was the first, or one of the first, cities in Italy to become Christian.³² This story began at Ascension, when the twelve apostles were sent to convert the world. Jacopo had a story, which he had first recounted years ago in more than one sermon, an old tradition he might have learned from a number of authorities, about how each apostle contributed one of what became twelve articles of faith, the Apostles Creed. This creed is the answer to our question about what faith meant to Jacopo—the series of statements following “I believe.”

Some of the apostles, like Peter, Paul, Mark, and Barnabas, ended up in Italy, and Jacopo favors the version of events that has Nazarius, baptized by Peter, preaching in Genoa thirty-five years after the Crucifixion, placing the city's conversion as a prompt and complete response to this teaching (around the year 65).³³ Nazarius was martyred the next year, the same as Peter and Paul. For proof of how solid and complete Genoa's faith was, Jacopo makes a virtue of no evidence and insists that the lack of martyrs in Genoa during the long age of persecution from Nero down to Constantine proves that the Genoese never killed any Christians. Jacopo is emphatic that no one can deny this. Even during the years of persecution Genoese ships helped Christians travel around the Mediterranean. Jacopo mistakenly imagines an ancient Genoa much like the great port of his own century. What comes across in this analysis is how Jacopo's Christian faith was rooted, like so many others, in a creed, but also in a strong notion that to be raised a Christian in Genoa was to be tapped into an old, authentic, and strong root of the faith. As we have seen throughout his works, Jacopo was deeply interested in the age of the martyrs, the heroic times of early Christianity. Hence a gap in local evidence could become a source of pride about Liguria's lack of bloody murders.

What we are looking for are distinctive or especially revealing aspects of Jacopo's faith or how he uses religion to explain things. For example, Jacopo accepts a standard six ages of the world and a biblical chronology that by his reckoning made the world 6,494 years old when he was writing in 1295.³⁴

32. The subject of an entire chapter, *CG*, 64–72.

33. *CG*, 67–72, for this and what follows. *Life of Nazarius, LA*, 677–80.

34. *CG*, 34–35, drawing from Eusebius and other authorities: (1) Adam to Noah, 2,242 years; (2) Noah to Abraham, 942 years; (3) Abraham to David, 940 years; (4) David to the Babylonian Captivity, 485 years; (5) Babylonian Captivity to Jesus, 590 years; (6) the Nativity to 1295, 1,295 years.

Jacopo knew that by common agreement he was living in the sixth age at some unknown point between Christ's birth and the end of the world. This world as he knew it was not very old, and he thought, in keeping with the general sense of his time, that humanity was much closer to its end than its beginning. This short time frame unified sacred history from Adam to his own time in a series of human life spans linking all people on the planet. This chronology did not intimidate Jacopo, who conceived a history that took in nearly all of it, from the perspective of Genoa.

Heresy, Jews, Suicide

Heresy concerned Jacopo, no doubt as a priest and theologian. Jacopo's knowledge of Christian history had introduced him to the problems of heresy from the earliest church to his own day, and we will have opportunity to look at some of these episodes later. As a scholar, Jacopo had one view of heresy, but as a Genoese, he emphatically assured his readers that there were no heretics in Genoa from its conversion down to the present day. Even if a heretic came from Lombardy, he was quickly burned.³⁵ In a later section where Jacopo was explaining three types of truthfulness in justice, doctrine, and life, he observed that heretics falsified the truth of doctrine.³⁶ He takes as his example 1 Timothy 4:1–3 and its warning about false teachers, an obvious source of faulty doctrine. It is nonetheless remarkable that in this context Jacopo has decided not to mention any more recent experience with heresy, and so he was content to cite a problem and heretics about 1,200 years old. No Dominican could be ignorant of the Cathars, certainly not the biographer of St. Peter Martyr. If they needed to be mentioned in a Genoese history, Jacopo would have placed them in it. The point, however, is in a sense Genoa's spiritual purity and orthodoxy. Though Jacopo placed Genoa's conversion close to the very beginning of Christianity, many places,

35. CG, 77; Jacopo's word is "erexia." The editor notes that the contemporary Anonymous Poet makes the same observation about the absence of heretics in Genoa, so it was a commonplace. Peter Biller, Caterina Bruschi, and Shelagh Sneddon, eds., *Inquisitors and Heretics in Thirteenth-Century Languedoc: Edition and Translation of Toulouse Inquisition Depositions, 1273–1282* (Leiden, 2011), 790–93, contains a notice of a small community of refugee Languedocian heretics living in Genoa, precisely the kind of people Jacopo was eager to find and expel. Inquisitors were active in Pavia, but no trace of their activities survives for Liguria. As a Dominican and a keen detector of heresy, Jacopo presumably knew all about heresy in Genoa and can be trusted on this topic. For an excellent work on Cathars in Italy, see Carol Lansing, *Power & Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford, 1998)—none in Genoa.

36. CG, 137.

some of them producing heretics, could and did make that claim. Jacopo had no particular way to explain *why* Genoa had been free of heresy for so long, except perhaps that it was perfect. In fact, Genoa was never a haven for medieval heretics of any kind.

In discussing the benefits coming from good judges, Jacopo compares avaricious judges to Judas, who sold Jesus because of his avarice.³⁷ Since Jesus was as he said (among other things) the truth (John 14:16), by selling out Christ, Judas also sold the truth, exactly what bad judges did. Hence bad judges are like Judas, as Jerome says; their love of money connects them. They are all avaricious traitors. As we know, Jacopo was very interested in Judas as an exemplary evil man who could be deployed in a variety of ways, here to argue strongly for impartial and incorruptible justice by judges in Genoa. He understood the ways money could tip the scales of justice. Another famous aspect of the Judas story, his suicide, was not relevant here, though we have seen Jacopo intensely interested in this topic.

Jacopo finds a place for this theme in his discussion of the person we know as Cato the Younger.³⁸ This Cato engages Jacopo because he demonstrates how a republic can grow through good morals and greatness of spirit rather than by riches, more people, or more soldiers. Cato was a great philosopher among the Romans and sided with Pompey against Julius Caesar. When he saw that Caesar had won, he took poison that did not work and then turned his sword against himself, because Caesar was an enemy of the republic. So strong was Jacopo's desire to find a historical person demonstrating civic virtue that he ended up lauding a suicide in this instance, and certainly not condemning the act. This side of Cato's reputation mattered to Jacopo, and to his contemporary Dante, because citizens of a republic, be it Rome, Genoa, or Florence, were supposed to be zealous for it, valuing their *patria* over their own lives. Judas valued money over God in this telling, and Cato liberty over his own life. Though self murder was the common outcome, the motives could hardly be more different as Jacopo saw them. The moral claims of paganism and Christianity with respect to suicide were not the issues mattering to Jacopo at this point. This thoroughly spiritual priest did not see patriotism as in any way in conflict with greatness of Christian spirit.

37. CG, 144–45.

38. CG, 177–78, for this and what follows—a little confusion with Cato the Elder, but Jacopo follows Augustine as his authority here.

Pope Joan

When Jacopo came to write about the time of Genoa's eighth bishop Sigebert, whom he inaccurately dated to around 869, his local sources, the archiepiscopal register, had nothing, and so he filled out these years with a story of a woman who had deceptively become pope at this time.³⁹ Historians are fortunate that Alain Boureau has written an excellent book on the legend of Pope Joan so we can see how Jacopo chose to participate in spreading this story, which he seems to have accepted as the truth.⁴⁰ Since our focus is on Jacopo and not the legend, let us see in brief how he tells the story. A learned woman in Rome became pope, then became pregnant, and died in a little house while giving birth. This death occurred as she found refuge while processing through Rome. The site explains a detour popes now always make in Rome when on this procession. Now there is a test to prevent a woman from being selected pope. A marble image declares the truth of the matter. (Jacopo does not explain this process but he must be alluding to another myth surrounding a special chair used to examine a pope's genitals to verify his gender. This is not a part of the story he wanted to include in this chronicle.) Jacopo uses the story to comment on what he calls the stupidity and shame of women, a generic analysis he applies to all women, everywhere. For this reason, among others, Boureau calls Jacopo's account an example of "solid misogyny."⁴¹

Boureau's work has established that Martin of Troppau contained the most extensive version of this story at the end of the thirteenth century, including that the pope in question was named Joan.⁴² This is one detail that Jacopo did not include in his chronicle, even though, as we have seen, Jacopo knew Martin's work and frequently used it as a source. Perhaps Jacopo, who revered the papacy, was not willing to include the name of Pope John, Joan in disguise, in his chronicle. Still, we are left to wonder why he mentioned such a disgraceful episode in the first place. Perhaps a clue to this result is that the next event Jacopo mentions from around this time is that a cardinal was elected pope whose name was *Os Porchi* (Pig Mouth). He changed his name to Sergius, and from this time all popes changed their

39. *CG*, 269–70, for what follows; the actual Sigebert was bishop in 782.

40. Boureau, *Myth of Pope Joan*, 120–22, for his judicious view of Jacopo's handling of the story. The book discusses everyone who wrote about Joan, so Jacopo can be viewed in the context of his fellow intellectuals and writers in medieval Europe.

41. *Ibid.*, 122.

42. *Ibid.*, 123–28, and as we have seen, Jacopo knew and used this chronicle as a source.

names to decorous ones. Simon becoming Peter was a precedent.⁴³ Since the Pope Joan story did not appear in *The Golden Legend* but the one about Pope Sergius did, we are left to suppose that having omitted Joan's name from the chronicle, a problem about a pope's name brought this story to his mind, one he had told before, so he put a version in this later work. Jacopo had only a tenuous hold on events between the age of Charlemagne and Caffaro's Genoese chronicle beginning in 1099. Doria was no real help to him here. So, he filled in the blanks by rummaging around his chronicles like Martin and Sigebert for anything fitting the hazy chronology of Genoese bishops in this period.

Jews

Jews occupied an uneasy place in Jacopo's thinking. In his previous works, Jacopo had nothing good to say about them, and as his Genoa had no Jews, he is an example of anti-Judaism, or antisemitism, without Jews. The only positive remark I have found about Jews in his works is that they were not idolaters.⁴⁴ He joined Isidore of Seville in the view that after the Last Judgment all languages would end and only Hebrew would remain.⁴⁵ As Jacopo had no Hebrew, this cannot have been especially good news. He goes on to observe that "they say" (usually a sign that what they say is wrong) that if a baby is raised hearing no languages it will speak Hebrew.⁴⁶ But this is nonsense because such a child will in fact not speak, because language is not from nature but is a human art or invention. Monleone thinks this is Jacopo's original idea, and that seems right in the context of Jacopo persistently deprecating Jews and their language. David and Solomon always appear in a positive light, but they are never labeled as Jews and it would be easy for Jacopo's audience to forget that inconvenient truth about them. This mindset influenced Jacopo's lengthy effort to piece together a story of Genoa's conversion to Christianity. He managed this without mentioning any Jews or Jewish converts.

43. CG, 270, and Jacopo had the same story in the *LA* life of Pelagius; there he associates the event with Pope Sergius II around 844. Monleone notes the kernel of truth in the tale; Pietro Bocca di Porco was consecrated Pope Sergius IV in 1009. Jacopo has garbled everything.

44. CG, 47.

45. CG, 13, for this and what follows; his authorities derived this opinion from 1 Cor. 13:8, which does mention languages ceasing, in the context of Paul's discourse or prophecies about love.

46. CG, 13, and Dante expresses the same view in *Paradiso* 26:130–32. Did Dante read this?

Jacopo inserted two favorite miracle stories about Jews that he had used before in *The Golden Legend*. They fall into the same category as the episode of Pope Joan; they help to stretch or fill in the blanks of Genoese history. Inserting these two stories is remarkable because they have absolutely nothing to do with Genoa. First, sometime approximately in the sixth century, a Jewish boy received the Eucharist with some Christians, and his angry father threw him into a burning furnace, where he remained unharmed. He says he was saved by the lady whose picture was in the church, and we know who she was.⁴⁷ The second story occurred in Syria around the time of Charlemagne, just after Jacopo discussed the problems about images and iconoclasm. A Jew pierced a picture of Jesus in his side, which proceeded to bleed real blood. The Jews collected this blood, ampoules of which were subsequently sent to various churches dedicated to the Holy Savior.⁴⁸ Converted Jews merited notice, and according to Jacopo there were none in Genoa to be had.

In the context of Jacopo's analysis of good government, he observed that discord among good people displeased God.⁴⁹ The devil sows this kind of discord (*zizania*). He puts divisions and scandals among the good. Conversely, harmony among evil people (also fostered by the devil) leads to plots to steal or kill. His example is telling. Discord among bad people is good. Acts demonstrates this by mentioning two sects of the Jews: the Pharisees, who believe in a resurrection, and the Sadducees who do not. However much these two groups were divided, they were united in persecuting Paul, who caused discord among them by believing in the resurrection. Hence the two groups disagreed, with Jacopo's implicit view that the Pharisees, about whom he had nothing positive to say, were more sympathetic to Paul. This disagreement between the two, however, turned out for the best, because Paul escaped death. Jacopo's Genoa was riven by factional strife. The old problem between the Guelfs and Ghibellines had largely abated with the triumph of the papal party in Italy, but there were still plenty of Genoese, even with no emperor to support, who detested papal policies in Italy and the eastern Mediterranean. In Jacopo's own time the main problem was a common one in Italian communes, a struggle between the *popolo*, however

47. CG, 234, and LA, 796, a reference not in Monleone. Michael Toch, *The Economic History of European Jews: Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages* (Leiden 2014), 23–24, has more on this story, which he found in Gregory of Tours (Jacopo's source?).

48. CG, 263; story in LA, 935, placed around 750, and told more briefly. These Jews eventually converted to Christianity.

49. CG, 121–22.

defined, and the nobility or merchant aristocracy in the case of Genoa. One of Jacopo's greatest accomplishments was to make a peace, alas temporary, in this ongoing dispute that occasionally became violent. Hence Jacopo knew all about discord among good people, which is probably how he viewed factionalism in his home town, though he was always more generous to the nobles because of his ties to the Fieschi and respect for the dominant old family in Genoa, the Doria. Finding the silver lining of good results from disputes between evil parties was not going to be a lesson of Genoese history, or even the Romans. When Jacopo needed this kind of material, his mind turned to the Jews.

Finally, in his eighth section on how citizens and especially officials of a republic should behave, Jacopo knows about the inevitable bouts of tyranny even a good state faces, and he is eager to explain to the Genoese how they should behave in such a situation. Good citizens should always be tranquil and not angry. Good officials should hate cruelty, as the book of Esther explained so well about Haman. Tyrants were known for their cruelty, and for taking bad advice as well as giving it. Searching his memory for an apt example of a tyrant, Jacopo names Caiaphas, who according to John 18:14 advised the Jews to kill Jesus.⁵⁰ According to Jacopo the Jews paid for this when Titus and Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem, killed many Jews, and dispersed the rest. Many tyrants and persecutors were known to Jacopo, from the Greeks and Romans, the Bible, down to figures of his own day like Emperor Frederick II. It is revealing that even in a political context, Jacopo's mind turned to Caiaphas rather than any of these.

Good and Bad Angels

Jacopo had a long-standing interest in the man he viewed as the third bishop of Genoa, Siro, a saint mentioned in the correspondence of Gregory the Great.⁵¹ Our interest here is in one of his final translations, when his body was moved from the monastery of San Siro to the new cathedral of San Lorenzo that Jacopo believed was being built in the late tenth century. Jacopo himself had the remains moved in June of 1293 and took the

50. CG, 159–60, for Caiaphas amid a wider discussion. Once more, we wonder about Dante, who in *Purgatorio* 17:25–30 mentions Mordechai and Esther.

51. CG, 226–27, but he crops up in many places because his body was frequently moved. Monleone sensibly places him in the fourth century.

opportunity to rework the standard biography of the saint.⁵² Jacopo had the box containing his remains opened to verify that it held bones, and he also busied himself collecting new miracle stories about the only prominent saint with a genuine connection to Genoa. One new story concerned a mysterious appearance by Siro in distant Antioch at the other end of the Mediterranean. Amid details not relevant here Jacopo found a way to include another of his favorite subjects—angels. God punishes bad men by means of good angels, just as he punished the Sodomites. We know very well what he means here: gay people, another group, as we have seen, that Jacopo never missed an opportunity to castigate. Sometimes God punished bad men with bad angels, demons, though he supplies no example here. At other times God allowed bad angels to harass good men, as in the cases of Job and Paul, whom Satan physically attacked (2 Cor. 12:7). Finally, however, the scholastic in Jacopo had to consider the possibility that God might punish good men by means of good angels, but he cannot recall ever reading this.

Jacopo's musings about angels here seem to be original, and once again a subject intrudes into the chronicle that might at first glance appear irrelevant to the history of Genoa. But not if we see it as Jacopo did. He had a sophisticated angelology that thoroughly integrated angels into human life down here. He knew very well that Satan and his minions were once part of the celestial hierarchy and remained completely under God's authority—no dualism in his world view. The question remaining is why or when would good angels be punishing good people. Obviously this logical possibility (however improbable) remained on his mind. Certainly bad things happened to good people, especially in the history of the good Genoese people. These chastisements were part of God's plan, down to the environmental disasters we will consider later. When these or similar events required agency to make sense of them, Jacopo could employ demons to explain them. Angels intended the best for people and guarded states as well as individuals. Jacopo has raised the theoretical possibility, the fourth pairing between good and bad angels and people, that our ostensible friends might afflict us. Jacopo admits that he never read anything about this, and he had a good (but not great) memory. Perhaps Jacopo thought that angels, as God's messengers, were responsible for implementing his will, which was always in the long view best. As a scholar Jacopo thinks first of knowledge as what he has read rather than what he has seen. It is also revealing that he

52. CG, 248, for this and what follows.

considers the possibility, if only to dismiss it. Still, what a confusing place late thirteenth-century Genoa must have been to stimulate such thoughts in the first place.

Holy Objects

The bones of San Siro were not the only things that interested Jacopo, though after inspecting them he verified their existence with his seal.⁵³ Images caught his eye because he knew about iconoclasm.⁵⁴ Genoese churches, especially San Matteo, had sculptures, tombs, and objects inserted into their exterior walls, all displaying to the world a family's triumphs, power, and even deceased ancestors.⁵⁵ The treasury of Genoa's cathedral of San Lorenzo, which was under Jacopo's charge as archbishop, contained several objects with a rich history of their own. Pride of place went to an object obtained as booty in 1101 after the conquest of Caesarea in the East.⁵⁶ Jacopo describes this object as an emerald vase or basin (*chatinus*), and he thinks it was used at the Last Supper. This platter is still in San Lorenzo and is a fine example of late ancient green glassware, and Jacopo was by no means the only person to think it was a great emerald. This basin or platter functioned as the thing into which Jesus dipped his bread. Jacopo sensibly admits that he does not know if this is true; no documents illuminate its history. Yet nothing is impossible to God. So Jacopo does not strongly assert or deny the claim. One problem he astutely notes is that Jesus was humble, and this emerald is not a humble dish. Jacopo solves this problem (and we must remember he thinks he has custody of what must be the largest emerald in the world) by proposing that if lamb was served on this platter it was a sign of reverence and hence its costliness appropriate. (The practical Genoese mind at work.) As a priest Jacopo also points out that the same line of reasoning justifies the use of precious cups and plates at the Eucharist. Whatever one thinks of this idea, it is a way to smooth over an apparent contradiction and a rejoinder to extremist views on the church's wealth.

Another story concerning this same object in the treasury was about a cup of gold and emerald, and Jacopo knows another account.⁵⁷ Nicodemus

53. CG, 407.

54. CG, 259, where he portrays the iconoclasts as opposing idolatry.

55. See Rebecca Müller, *Sic hostis frangit: Spolien und Trophäen im mittelalterlichen Genua* (Weimar, 2002) for a discussion of this phenomenon, copiously illustrated.

56. CG, 307–11, for this and what follows.

57. CG, 312–14; Jacopo claims that the original source is British books, and Monleone tracks it down to the chronicle of Helinand. The green charger at times in its history had a golden frame.

collected Jesus' blood in this cup at the cross, and it is called the Sangraal, or the Holy Grail. This object too ended up in Caesarea and may be the one that has come to Genoa. Jacopo goes on at length about how perfect this basin is because it is made from an emerald. It cannot be the product of nature (the precious stone) or human hands (art) but must result from God's handiwork. Thus a miraculously preserved piece of glass has become in Jacopo's telling one of the most precious Christian items in existence, surely equaling the Crown of Thorns or any number of pieces of the True Cross. It was important to Jacopo to elevate Genoa as an important Christian city, not just for its commerce, fleets, or wealth. Whatever story explaining the emerald that came to Genoa worked for him.

Prelates

In the chapter devoted to the secular government of Genoa, as Jacopo works his way through the good qualities of well-run states, he comes to consider the varieties of truthfulness. Soon he is on the theme of how rulers and prelates should not hesitate to rebuke all those who needed to be reminded of their negligence or misdeeds.⁵⁸ Jacopo had good scriptural support for this view (Titus 2:15) as well as a direct remark by Jesus that "because of the increase of evildoing, the love of many will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12) by now, a clear reference to the clergy and officials who refrained from speaking the truth. Though Jacopo continues to write about both secular and spiritual rulers, the group of which he was part, the prelates seem to be mostly on his mind. Jacopo writes that many rulers and prelates *today* at the beginning of their careers are hot (zealous), in the middle tepid, and at the end quite cold. The careerists (let us call them that) who end up this way are not men but chimeras. According to the philosophers and poets (not Jacopo's customary reading, so his source here may be Isidore) a chimera was not a real animal but an imaginary one with the head of a lion, the middle part like a goat, and the tail like a serpent.⁵⁹ This hybrid, certainly not mentioned in the Bible, must have struck Jacopo as an appropriate metaphor here because if one looks at a chimera, it does begin well with the head of a lion but becomes by the end an ominous snake. The chimera can be a symbol of time's passage

58. CG, 141–42, for this and what follows.

59. Monleone has no source here, but Bertini Guidetti proposes Isidore *Etymologies* 1.40 as the source (Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 169), but in my view this application of the chimera is Jacopo's original idea.

and how a man or an institution can lose its original zeal over time. So, as the Lord says in the Apocalypse to a certain prelate who had previously been very zealous, but afterward had become lukewarm, "I hold it against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first" (Rev. 2:4–5, a warning to the church at Ephesus, which Jacopo has directed to prelates, like an archbishop?). Since Jacopo wrote these words when he was a prelate of the church and after his long career as an administrator in the Dominican order, he must have been wondering about where he was on the continuum of career and motivation. (Perhaps he knew he was not likely to become a cardinal.) This section ended on how it was the job of good judges and rulers to hate (and presumably rebuke) avarice and greed, in context as enemies of the truth. Surely there was a lot going on in Genoa in the 1290s that merited criticism, and whose job was that if not the city's spiritual leader, its archbishop? In fact, as we will see, Jacopo may have taken this warning to heart because he was eager to advise if not rebuke his fellow citizens.

Genoa

Genoa's conversion to Christianity has already been considered, and naturally the entire chronicle is in some way, however tangential, about Genoa. Since this book is not a history of Genoa but an inquiry into Jacopo's mental geography, we can best make progress by looking at a few topics that draw his deepest attention. The first of these is the founding of the city.⁶⁰

Jacopo spent a long part of his chronicle accounting for the founding of Genoa because he had three versions to explain and to weigh. His choices on these matters reveal how he thinks. Also, he believed that foundation stories were important because they illuminated enduring features of a place's history that explained its present circumstances. The common thread through the tales is the medieval Latin name of the city, *Iannua*. (Jacopo knows that the Romans spelled this as *Genua*, but this is irrelevant to the stories because its origin is inexplicable, hence dull.) This feminine form suited the name of a *civitas*, but anyone as interested in etymology as Jacopo knew the ultimate word to explain must be *Ianus*. Jacopo knew three: a mighty ruler from the East who came to be king of Italy, an (inevitable) prince of Troy, and a king of

60. All of these topics appear in my *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 171–74, on Jacopo, who is inexplicably missing from the index.

Egypt who came west, becoming the Roman god Janus.⁶¹ The first is a puzzling affair because no one has tracked down the source for its fanciful account.⁶² This Janus is a post-Flood story and concerns people who came west to rule and build cities, as Nimrod founded Ravenna. Janus founded Genoa, and Jacopo observes that “our city” was very small at the start, hence the diminutive *Ianiculum*. According to Solinus Janus did this, but others reject this account and insist that Solinus must have been writing about some other place. Jacopo contends that these critics are wrong because in all of Italy no other city is called *Ianua* or *Ianicola*. He agrees with Isidore that the temple in Rome, called *Ianiculum*, is not the city called *Ianicola*, which in any case was older than Rome anyway. Jacopo did not know Virgil, and he was not going to let any city in Italy take pride of place over his home town. He also knew from reading Jacopo Doria that whatever Genoa was at the time of the Carthaginian wars it was not much, so the city started off as a small settlement. There was nothing implausible about this assumption, and it allowed Jacopo to annex *Ianicola*. This story also had the advantage of being attached to the Bible, however tenuously. Yet this story ended up grafted back into pagan legend as Jacopo claims that Saturn was the third prince in this line, with his three sons Jove, Neptune, and Pluto, and the Olympus story, which does not interest Jacopo at all. Instead, he writes about the eunuch Saturn, who ruled in Italy after Janus and taught its inhabitants how to build houses, cultivate the land, plant vines, and learn about wheat from the Greeks.⁶³

A prince of Troy named Janus was another way to rival Rome, and across Europe imitators of Virgil, consciously or not, linked their cities or countries to ancient Troy and its all too numerous refugees. Monleone knew that Jacopo paraphrased Eutropius for all this, and why he included a long version of the judgment of Paris is a puzzle, unless we remember his love of a good story.⁶⁴ To make a long story short, Jacopo takes biblical references to flight (e.g., James 4:7) and directly from sin (1 Cor. 6:18) to justify his attention to the Trojan refugees, especially the three “magnates” (his word

61. CG, 14–30, for the following. See Carrie E. Beneš, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250–1350* (University Park, 2011), 62–87, for a different approach to Genoa and some remarks on Jacopo Doria and Jacopo da Varagine.

62. CG, 15–16; Monleone suggests it might be the lexicographer Papias or the late Roman historian Eutropius.

63. CG, 19, a remarkable take on the Greek contribution to ancient Italy. Jacopo knows nothing about the Etruscans here.

64. CG, 20. Jacopo names Ovid as his source on Paris; Monleone thinks Jacopo may have been familiar with Ovid’s Epistle 17, but I think Jacopo seldom knew ancient authors directly and probably picked this up from some intermediary, but it was like him to cite Ovid.

for nobles) Antenor, Aeneas, and Janus. According to Jacopo, the Greeks dated their years from the fall of Troy, Jews from the Exodus, or the giving of the law, Romans from the founding of their city (AUC), and Christians from the Incarnation.⁶⁵ As was well known, Antenor ended up in the Veneto and founded Padua, where he was buried. Aeneas and Rome required no elaboration. Janus sailed to “our region,” “partes nostras,” and arrived at Albaro where the wind stopped. According to Jacopo an evening breeze then kicked up that enabled the mariner to press on to a little place called *Ianicola*, where he built a fort called Castello.⁶⁶ Jacopo knows well that this high point in Genoa, once the Roman city, was now the site of the archbishop’s palace.

Jacopo considers this story of Prince Janus of Troy to be an old and famous account, which we know from our ancestors, who learned it from theirs.⁶⁷ He found support in Psalm 78:5–6 for believing that truth passed down this way through fathers, and Moses himself had advised people to ask their Father (Deut. 32:7). So, Jacopo has not learned this version from any old history but on the authority of what he calls “old and public authority,” “ex fama publica et antiqua.” (“Fama” is a difficult word to translate, but in context here it means “authority,” blending into the reputation of a reliable oral tale.) Whether or not Jacopo is right that a tale of Trojan origins was still circulating on the streets of Genoa and somehow derived from oral tradition matters less than that he liked it and expressed his own thoughts on how the Bible and plain reasoning sustained this theory of verifying a story.

The third story concerned the Roman god Janus and is important because it compelled Jacopo to admit, as was necessary to explain their conversion to Christianity, that the Genoese were once pagans. Yet he has a theory of religion to help explain this lapse. When the Genoese were ruled by the ancient Romans and wanted to please them and have their favor, they worshipped Janus, and he cites the great dictionary by Ugucione da Pisa as his source for details on this two-faced god.⁶⁸ Jacopo includes this for the sake of completeness, but it is not the explanation he favors. Elsewhere in the part

65. CG, 23. Nothing about the Greek Olympiads.

66. CG, 26–27; Jacopo finds the name Albaro to have derived from *albasia*, the name for this fortuitous wind. Monleone thought this was an ingenious bit of reasoning, for Jacopo to have taken the dialect word *arbaxia* for this evening wind to explain the name of Albaro. In my view Jacopo’s work abounds in this type of zany etymologies, a contemporary taste shared by Balbi and many others. The rest of the story probably derives from Doria.

67. CG, 27–28, for this remarkable statement of method.

68. CG, 30–31. Jacopo knew his dictionaries; Monleone is wrong to suppose that the author of the dictionary is the more famous eponymous canonist. Balbi, *Catholicon* has no entry on this pagan god.

of the chronicle where Jacopo considers the separate question of how Genoa got its name, he goes over much of the same material but makes a few fresh points.⁶⁹ Whichever Janus one prefers, Jacopo sees the problem this way. If Romulus had not built the city of Rome, named after himself, who would have heard of Romulus today? (Remember that Jacopo was no great reader of the Latin classics.) So what does it matter precisely who this Janus was? Psalm 49:12 is an authority for naming places, but is it not better to have one's name recorded in the Book of Life, and remembered with the names of the righteous, than by implication having it attached to some piece of geography, even one as important to Jacopo as Genoa? Jacopo deprecates this type of tiresome etymologizing, so here he does not care which Janus it is, and he again casts doubt on the version that says it is the Roman god Janus. This opinion did not stop him from finding a place for a great deal of irrelevant information on Roman idolatry, down to the sacred geese and the golden goose. This may be what Boureau had in mind by Jacopo's cultural bulimia.

Jacopo knows a third possible derivation of the city's name *Ianua* as a word for mouth or entrance like *ostium*.⁷⁰ Jacopo uses the same phrasing that appears in Giovanni Balbi's *Catholicon* (without naming this source) that Genoa is the gateway to Lombardy, Tuscany, and Provence, giving the city its widest possible economic significance. This perspective gave Jacopo the occasion to write a long and original section on how Genoa stands out in all of Italy, in fact the closest he comes to an economic history of Genoa. It is important to note this material grew out of a discussion of the city's name and his desire to separate the city from any pagan associations (more on this theme below). This material is also important because it goes to the heart of Jacopo's feelings for his home town, and perhaps his understanding of it as well. Genoa was a useful city to its neighbors.⁷¹ Its citizens import goods from overseas that they send to other cities. Jacopo understands that trade was the engine of Genoa's prosperity and power. He also praised its site as a very healthy place (which it is). Other places (he may have Rome or Pisa in mind) have fetid swamps nearby and smokey air. In summer the heat and hot winds carry in diseases, making people sick. This bit of environmental history must be about malaria, which spared Genoa because what waters there were in rugged Liguria fell rapidly to the sea, without lakes or swamps for

69. CG, 44–55, another lengthy section on etymology.

70. CG, 53–55, here, but Jacopo will not follow Isidore, his source here along with Uguccone, for the idea that *genua* may derive from knees and evoke the city's somehow birthing the produce of Lombardy. Instead, he brings this issue up when he discusses the etymology of *Genua* (57).

71. CG, 55, for this and what follows.

breeding mosquitoes. Jacopo rightly remarks that in “our city” there are no swampy areas but greenery (soon including beautiful gardens in the villas of Genoa’s elites), not smokey (or foggy?) but pure air. The southern winds in summer do not blow from swamps or sulfurous places but from the sea and hence cool the city so it is not awfully hot. (The climate must have changed since his time, since Genoa in July is no treat, or he may be exaggerating.)

Jacopo’s understanding of Genoa’s environment was directly tied to how Genoa was able to help other places. His ideas about this help sound conventional; Genoa fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, gave shelter to travelers, took care of the sick, and with good will and alms helped prisoners.⁷² As generalities these claims do not distinguish Genoa from any other city. But in Genoa’s local context these comments mean more. Monleone notes that Jacopo knew Doria’s chronicle, which emphasized the role Genoa played in fostering the grain trade during the Mediterranean famine of 1276. From the city’s large leper colony at nearby Capo Fari and its growing industry in wool cloth production to the large numbers of Pisan prisoners taken in the 1280s, each of Jacopo’s statements resonated with real local history. Even the Venetian Marco Polo, who began the account of his travels while in a Genoese prison in the late 1290s, could testify (but did not) to the city’s relative humanity. It was important to the city’s archbishop to make the connection between Genoa’s wonderful climate and the scope of what its people had accomplished.

Jacopo’s pride in his home town made even more sense in the context of his assessment that other cities had declined, and he named them: Rome, Babylon (Baghdad, not Cairo), Constantinople, Ravenna, Aquilea, and many others.⁷³ As a reasonably well-traveled Dominican who had attended general chapter meetings in the 1270s and 1280s, Jacopo had certainly seen the ruins in Rome, and visiting Venice could have easily brought Ravenna and Aquilea to his notice. Baghdad and Constantinople he learned about from Genoese travelers who knew all about how the French crusaders and Mongols had wrecked these places in the thirteenth century. Jacopo’s sense of Genoese history had it growing from small and obscure origins to a great city, indeed the greatest in reaching a state of perfection. We will look at Jacopo’s idea of the perfect after a few more details on how he thought about Genoa.

The account of how Genoa became a Christian city filled many pages in the chronicle and allowed Jacopo to display his knowledge of ecclesiastical

72. *CG*, 58–59, for this and what follows.

73. *CG*, 59.

history as well as to buttress his claim that Genoa was on the road to perfection, and this was a necessary stage. We have already briefly seen how Jacopo believed that Genoa was the first or one of the first cities in Italy to become Christian, and he begins this part of the study of Genoa's transition from paganism to Christianity at the Ascension.⁷⁴ Jacopo was emphatic that no Christian had ever been killed during this process, and he was sure no one could deny that. This was as good a way as any to put the best face on the absence of any local martyrs.⁷⁵ The many blanks in Genoa's church history could be explained by the fact that other historians had not cared about Genoa because it was small and only mattered locally.⁷⁶ So historians did not know about it and missed its rise to becoming a great port, which Jacopo sees as directly related to its spiritual growth. Now, from Syria and Greece to Spain, it kept the seas open and safe, just as Genoa's smaller role had made the Mediterranean safe for travel in the time of the apostles. It was important for Jacopo to believe that his city was now known throughout the entire world (possibly true even in India and China). Jacopo understood that this fame rested on Genoa's victories in its wars, especially the crusades but also against rivals in Italy, the Pisans and Venetians. We will take up this matter in the next chapter because the actual wars are a place where Jacopo's accuracy was poor. Here, we need simply note that the wars in defense of Christendom against the Saracens proved to Jacopo's satisfaction that the greatness of Genoa was revealed in the consequences of its sincere spiritual growth (partly under his own tutelage).

Jacopo never claimed to be a historian free from bias or to be writing without zeal or anger. Some parts of Genoese history show the filters or blinders that Jacopo used when conceiving the Genoese past. In 1257, as a result of complex developments internal to Genoa and problems overseas, the *popolo* of Genoa rose against the noble oligarchy ruling the city and installed Guglielmo Boccanegra their captain and ruler of Genoa.⁷⁷ This revolution was one of the most significant events of the century and mirrored similar well-known developments in other Italian cities, the phenomenon of the rise of the *popolo*. By the time Jacopo was writing the nobles, under the Doria and Spinola families, were back in charge of Genoa, but the people still mattered and would rise again (and again). Jacopo took pains to edit Boccanegra's regime out of Genoa's history. He did not mention it in his account of regime

74. CG, 64–77, a lot of history here.

75. CG, 75.

76. CG, 82.

77. For a brief survey, see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 146–52.

changes in the thirteenth century, or even in the notices of Genoa's wars. Only in the part of his chronicle devoted to episcopal reigns does he mention Boccanegra, and only in this way: "In 1257 Guglielmo Boccanegra was made captain of the Genoese people and held the captaincy for five years."⁷⁸ A lot happened in these five years as Jacopo knew well from the contemporary city chronicle, also hostile to Boccanegra, as well as his own youthful memories. It is impossible to believe that Jacopo did not understand the significance of the revolution or the new regime. Rather, he did not want to write about it. The reasons are not far to seek. Whatever the status of his own family in Genoa, and they were not nobles, Jacopo was sympathetic to the noble captains of the people and always suspicious of mob rule. He was also deeply attached to the noble Fieschi family, whose two popes, many cardinals, and other officials dominated church affairs in Liguria for most of Jacopo's life. To the extent that the revolution in 1257 was partly a response to fatigue about supporting the papacy and its choices in the Mediterranean, Jacopo was no friend to it. Episodes in Genoese history where the city charted its own course and was willing to endure years of papal opposition and even excommunication, as when it planned to help the Greek emperor against the French in Constantinople (1261) or the Sicilian rebels against the Angevins (1282), received little or no notice in Jacopo's chronicle. What a historian leaves out is just as important to understanding how his mind works as what he includes. Jacopo had a vivid sense of being an official "establishment" historian, and this entailed a strong partiality to the Guelf party and its noble leaders.

One other omission is worth noting. Around 1123 a dispute between Pisa and Genoa over who was predominant on the island of Corsica became a war. One way to frame the problem was that the archbishop of Pisa was the superior of Corsica's bishops, and to counter this advantage, Genoa needed to have its own see raised to an archbishopric so that it could prevail, at least spiritually, on Corsica. Even if Genoa conquered the place, Pisa's ecclesiastical authority would cause endless problems. Genoa claimed that Pisa was not in charge of Corsica, and in 1123 Pope Calixtus II sustained that view.⁷⁹

78. CG, 387: "anno Domini MCCLVII, Guillelmus Bocanigra factus est capitaneus populi Ianuensis et tenuit capitaneum per annos v."

79. The contemporary annalist Caffaro, active in these events, recounts Genoa's case well; see *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 1, 1099–1173, ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano (Genoa, 1890), 18–22, for this and what follows. A useful Italian translation is *Gli Annali di Caffaro (1099–1163)*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi (Genoa, 2002), 79–84, but it includes almost none of Belgrano's critical apparatus or editorial comments here, and not the memorandum of the embassy. There is now a fine translation of the chronicle, and other works, in Martin Hall and Jonathan Phillips, *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades* (Farnham, 2013).

Caffaro was part of the delegation that went to Rome to negotiate these matters, and L. T. Belgrano included in his edition of Caffaro's chronicle one of the earliest political documents to survive in the Genoese archives. This report of his legation includes a remarkable and detailed list of the payments Caffaro and his associates made in Rome to named officials in the Curia. Caffaro explained that all this cost five hundred marks in silver and gold, a considerable sum prudently borrowed in Rome rather than borrowed elsewhere and risked while traveling. A long story of warfare and papal excommunication of the Pisans dragged this business along into the 1130s.

Jacopo's main source for all these events was Caffaro's chronicle. He was probably familiar with the commune's political archive, and in any case city officials had preserved Caffaro's report now for over 150 years, presumably for its intrinsic value in setting Genoa's rule in Corsica on a secure foundation. The record of the bribes/payments must also have been intriguing. Jacopo drastically compresses Caffaro's account of these events, emphasizes the naval battles, and mentions nothing about any embassy to Rome or its costs.⁸⁰ Jacopo introduced the career of the twentieth (by his odd reckoning) bishop of Genoa, Siro, by noting that when Pope Innocent II had made him bishop of Genoa in 1130 after a vacancy of one year, he promised him to raise Genoa to an archbishopric for all the help the city had given to the papacy.⁸¹ The pope fulfilled this promise in 1133, and Siro went on to be Genoa's first archbishop for thirty years.

Jacopo mainly knew only what Caffaro had recorded about the early twelfth century. Bad relations with Pisa remained important down to the time of Genoa's complete defeat of Pisa at the Battle of Meloria in 1284, which Jacopo Doria had written about in detail and of which Jacopo da Varagine was also a contemporary observer. In fact a rare detail about this period *not* in Caffaro concerns the rebuilding of the church of San Matteo in 1125 by Martino Doria; this church became the center of the Doria clan's neighborhood in Genoa.⁸² The point of these facts is to build a case that Jacopo's history of Genoa was selective and self-serving, always putting the city and Jacopo's idea of the right families in the best possible light. This archbishop was not about to include a story of large payments to Rome coinciding with papal favor to Genoa. Jacopo believed that by the 1290s, his

80. CG, 326–30.

81. CG, 331–33, for his account, which erroneously claims that Siro was also a cardinal (perhaps a dream of Jacopo's?) and implicitly assumes that the help was against an antipope.

82. CG, 329.

time of writing, Genoa had become a great city, indeed a perfect one—an unusual word to describe any place in this sinful world.⁸³ This triumphant story began in 1135 and continued to the present. Its themes were victorious wars and loyalty to the pope. By this measure Jacopo was correct.

Government

Jacopo did not intend his chronicle to be a handbook for princes. But he devoted one-third of his work in outline to the government of Genoa. A separate book should explore his political philosophy and thought in the wider context of intellectual and scholastic political theory in Europe in the late thirteenth century. Our investigation of Jacopo's mental world should set his thoughts about government in the broader context available here, which is everything else he thought about. He distinguished secular government from the activities of Genoa's bishops and archbishops, of course ending with himself. He must have sensed that in the previous century the bishop or archbishop of Genoa was a more significant political figure than he now was. Though Genoa's political structures shared many common features with communal government in northern Italy, as we shall see, a historian on the spot was in the best position to explain Genoa's unique experiences in self-rule.⁸⁴ Yet our focus will not be on this vast topic, but more narrowly on how Jacopo chose to tell the story and what this selection and style tell us about him.⁸⁵

In section six Jacopo sets out the three themes he will discuss: the different regimes in the city's history, that it was better to be ruled by one rather than by many, and a final word on the effects of good and bad government.⁸⁶ Jacopo began with his overall interpretation of Genoese history, and this required him to admit that Genoa had experienced many forms of government. The first system of government was a commune with yearly consuls, and this lasted until 1190. Down to 1216 the city had a mix of consuls and a *podestà*, a professional city manager who was always a foreigner. From 1216

83. CG, 90–110, an entire section on perfection.

84. The two standard works in English on the Italian context are P. J. Jones, *Italian City-State from Commune to Signoria* (Oxford, 1997) and Daniel Waley and Trevor Dean, *The Italian City-Republics*, 4th ed. (Harlow, 2010). Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes, 1125–1325* (University Park, 2005) provides general background on religious practices and communes in parts of northern Italy, but not Genoa, and discusses Dominican preaching, but not Jacopo's.

85. For the Genoese context, see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 9–139, political history in context.

86. CG, 110–27, for this and what follows.

there were no more consuls but a *podestà* ruling with an advisory council of eight nobles, and this lasted until 1270. (Yet again Jacopo will not notice the rising of the people and the captaincy of Guglielmo Boccanegra in 1257.) Then Oberto Spinola and Oberto Doria served as captains with the advice of *anziani* (elders, nobles) and an official called the *abate del popolo* who was supposed to represent their interests. This regime lasted until 1291 when the city resumed the office of *podestà*, keeping the *abate* and *anziani*, and this lasted until the time of his writing. This was all accurate (as far as it went) and Jacopo, an experienced Genoese observer, expressed the hope that if there were any more changes in government God would let the change be for the best.⁸⁷

This prayer led Jacopo to his next theme, the right number of rulers, and at times this part becomes more like a sermon than a chronicle, a characteristic habit of this preacher. Inspired by an allegory developed by Augustine, Jacopo proposes three sorts of men who might rule: one out of many who is powerful (like gold), another out of many who is rich and wise (silver), and another of poor and humble condition (like wood).⁸⁸ (We can sense where this is going, but we must remember Jacopo's originality of mind.) The world values the rich and powerful more than the poor man, but if the latter is a better person and just, he will prove to be the superior ruler. Jacopo illustrates this point with a classic Old Testament theme, the rich and powerful Saul and the poor shepherd David, and we know how that turned out (1 Sam. 23–26). One problem here is that Jacopo deprecated modern kingship and he did not intend to put forward the Bible's prevalent system of government, monarchy, as one ever suited to Genoa. Yet Jacopo, presuming that God's will intended the best for the Genoese, believed that the form of government would also turn out for the best.

Jacopo favored one ruler over many and used this natural and quite Genoese image to explain himself. Like experiencing contrary winds making headway difficult, discordant rulers ruin the people, and he found scriptural support (Jer. 12:10) for the view that many shepherds can destroy the vineyard (overgrazing?). Just as one God ruled over all people, one head over the body, and even the bees have one king [*sic*], so government too should imitate nature.⁸⁹ But we sense that the Genoese were not insects or subjects,

87. CG, 116.

88. Jacopo found this story of the three keys in Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4:26, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford, 1995), 228, but he radically reworks it, making it his own. Jacopo cites this book by name, author, and book in the *LA*, 345.

89. CG, 118, for this, his thinking.

and it is not kingship in the regular medieval European sense that is being advanced here.

Like the good scholastic thinker he was, Jacopo considers the possibility that in fact many rulers are better than one. When good men are in harmony this might work, but when in discord it would not. Oddly, when bad men are in discord that turns out for the best, but it could hardly be recommended as a system of government. Concord was an important value to Jacopo, and he compared it to the loving relationship between brothers, among kin, and between husband and wife (following *Ecclus.* 25:1–2, a passage Jacopo also used in his sermons and life of Jerome). Jacopo also evoked Paul (in 1 *Cor.* 1:11–13) admonishing his disciples in disagreement about baptism, and for Jacopo the experience of true baptism of the spirit should instill harmony among good people. Needless to say, the political harmony resulting from a common faith excluded all outsiders, be they Jews or heretics. God hated sowers of discord, whoever they may be, and the devil encouraged common purpose among evil people in order to foster stealing and killing. Discord among the bad is a good thing, and Jacopo's example of this phenomenon is revealing and by this point not unexpected. We have already seen this in how the disagreements among the Pharisees and Sadducees saved Paul's life. A local author had to work very hard to write about discord without reference to Genoa. The problem was, in my view, that Jacopo saw the Genoese as basically good, regardless of faction, and he wished to appear ostensibly neutral in order to preserve his role as peacemaker between Guelfs and Ghibellines.

Placing these problems in a remote and vague context, rather than in the gritty world of Genoese factionalism, made sense in any chronicle aiming for official status, even to the point of imposture. For example, Jacopo thought that a tyrant by definition was not a true ruler but simply a person out for his own good and not that of the people.⁹⁰ A tyrant imposes his vices on his people, like avarice, as Solomon observed (in *Prov.* 29:4). An angry tyrant was like a wolf (*Ezek.* 22:27). Jacopo warmed to his theme of tyrants being like ferocious beasts. Another feature of bad rulers was that they were not humble. But once again, Jacopo reached back into the deep past to explain how the Roman people devised ways to keep their consuls humble as they returned home in triumph. This is a characteristic digression by Jacopo, to use the theme of humility to insert a short summary of the Roman triumph, and cite Cicero as his authority when almost certainly the material

90. *CG*, 122–24, for this and what follows.

comes from an intermediate source.⁹¹ His method is becoming clear: cite the most remote authority and find a way to include everything he has ever read. No more recent example, and naturally no Genoese one, illuminated the issue of tyranny, or humility. In order to show the many benefits flowing from a just ruler (always *rector*), Jacopo constructs a long metaphor, probably his own idea but inspired by Livy (not likely read in the original), that a good ruler is like a stomach feeding its members (presumably the people). If the stomach fails in its duty the body dies.⁹² So a magistrate and his advisors (like a *podestà* or captain and the *anziani*, but one must read between the lines to see them) should deliberate and digest everything through good discussion. (One wonders if this was the way Jacopo presided over his Dominicans or the cathedral chapter.)

Jacopo turns to prescriptive ideas on how good rulers should behave. He is happy to repeat the commonplace (and no less vital for it) that the Bible is the queen of all ways of knowing, hence the repository of the best examples for rulers.⁹³ The other “sciences” were like servants (*famulae*) or slaves (*pedisequae*), keeping his feminine nouns straight. We need not follow Jacopo through his impressive knowledge of biblical passages on the theme of picking good leaders, except for one example. Justice always concerned Jacopo, and beyond wanting judges to be virtuous he also urged that they should not be timid or afraid to punish the rich, as explained in John 7:24.⁹⁴ They should judge by the merit of the case and not the standing of the litigants. As Solomon wrote in Proverbs 20:23, weight by weight, justice should be the same for all. Jacopo used an anecdote from Valerius Maximus (again probably from some collection by a later writer) to illustrate this theme that great and common people should be treated the same way. Solomon was the ideal biblical ruler, and also a good example of how a ruler should not be too strict or too mild. When David associated Solomon with his rule he did not put him on a horse or donkey, but on a mule, which had the spirit of a horse but the habits of a donkey. In the same way justice should sit between two extremes. Mules were vital to Genoese transport and also a hybrid rich in spiritual meanings.⁹⁵ This was as close a local example as Jacopo deployed to extol the virtues of moderation.

91. Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 155.

92. *CG*, 125.

93. *CG*, 127: “*Sacra pagina est omnium scientiarum regina*,” a phrase also used by his contemporary Bonaventure in his commentary on the Hexameron, Brepols Library of Latin Literature, Series A, accessed March 17, 2013.

94. *CG*, 128–30, for this and what follows.

95. See my *Medieval Discovery of Nature* (Cambridge, 2012), 40–77, for more on the uses of the medieval mule.

The Bible also contained many examples of rulers who feared God, the second of Jacopo's qualities a good ruler ought to have. Again, rather than follow the many biblical examples that Jacopo lists from Jehosephat forward, let us follow a few themes revealing Jacopo's habits of thought.⁹⁶ From a book Jacopo knew well, Augustine's *City of God*, he extracted a story about Alexander the Great and a pirate that considered which one of them was the greater thief. When Jacopo thought about the consequences for the good of a ruler who feared God he thought about thefts, great and small, all to be punished equally, regardless of the social standing of the thief. Piracy was a durable issue in Genoese history, as victim and agent. Certainly Jacopo thought that God would punish a sin like avarice equally, without respect to the wealth of the greedy person. But human justice was prone to slip unless it benefited from good examples and precepts.

Third, judges and rulers should be truthful, in justice, doctrine, and their private lives.⁹⁷ Jacopo had no use for blind guides (Matt. 15:12–14). Let us look at who Jacopo thought these people might be. Bad lawyers falsified the truth of justice because of their greed and avarice. Heretics perverted the truth of doctrine. False teachers and preachers were hypocrites perverting the truth of life. Jacopo's concerns about selling justice extended to situations in which keeping silent was the real crime, and also by not defending the truth. He understood that fear was the main motive behind a silence promoting falsehood.⁹⁸ A hard lesson of communal politics in later medieval Italy was that once corruption or factionalism started determining the course of justice, people would lose faith in its impartiality and hold the laws in contempt. In Genoa politics was completely divisive and bitter, but relying on a *podestà* and professional judges from other parts of Italy was intended to ensure that at least the courts were free from this sort of corruption. The test of this is whether or not the courts judged according to the truth of the matter, or the connections of the litigants.

Weighed or counted in the balance, found wanting, and cast out, that was the writing on the wall (Dan. 6:25) and the best guide to faithful judging. The best rulers or judges lived and worked by the spirit, the bad ones according to worldly values. This brought Jacopo to the image of bleary eyes not seeing rightly, something connected to Paul's writing and maybe his

96. CG, 131–35, for this and what follows.

97. CG, 136–38.

98. CG, 138; Jacopo cites Augustine on fear and Isidore on silence, and Monleone has identified the possible sources for this theme, which Jacopo had previous used in a sermon of St. Thomas of Canterbury, of all people. See *SS*, 58r.

own experience as well. Jacopo went as far as interpreting Titus 2:15 and its admonition to rebuke with all authority to apply to negligent rulers *and* prelates who did not call out those who needed to be rebuked.⁹⁹ Jacopo would not, could not, go so far as to suggest that it was the business of ordinary people to rebuke their rulers, temporal or spiritual, neglectful or not. He did not rise so high in bureaucracies by rocking the boat. But he was experienced enough with them to know and cite Jesus' prophesy (Matt. 24:12) about how evil will abound and the love of many will grow cold. It was at this point that he introduced his ideas on what we might call the career path of rulers and prelates in his own time who started out zealous and ended up cold and cynical. The problem in this context was more practical: what could one do, what was one supposed to do, about such poor rulers? They were certainly in no position to rebuke anyone. Jacopo had no good ideas here or theories of social or political protest or revolution to draw upon; the best he could do was to urge these bad rulers to return to the warmth of their first love, presumably the good motive for taking up authority in the first place, and do penance for their falling away from the original high ideals. No one else was in a position to do anything about them. This would not mean that Archbishop Jacopo would not rebuke an incompetent subordinate, but he probably thought only the pope could discipline him, and it was none of his business to criticize secular government and its doings. Even when he disagreed with the policies of government, like those in the five years under Boccanegra, he chose omission over invective.

Finally, Jacopo turned to his fourth point, that rulers should hate avarice and greed. He agreed with Paul that greed (*cupiditas*) was the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Then, however, Jacopo faced a problem because he was not about to claim that Genoa's present rulers were greedy, or that the pope was, or that Genoa's past regimes were staffed by the avaricious. Genoa's labyrinthine system of taxation offered many opportunities for fraud and abuse, but for a Genoese Jacopo was surprisingly incurious about taxes and rarely mentioned them. (Envious neighbors of the Genoese sometimes judged them all as tight-fisted, and certainly Dante despised them.) At this vexed point Jacopo writes about a mute frog (of all things) who, either because he cannot speak or is greedy, has to hide everything.¹⁰⁰ The clue to what

99. CG, 140.

100. CG, 142–43; he names no source, and Monleone suggests he may have taken it from Hugh of Saint-Cher, who got it from Strabo, or Jacopo may have learned it from a number of commentaries on Exodus discussing frogs. Bertini Guidetti has nothing on this.

is going on here may be what Jacopo turns to next: he observes that dogs can bark and scare away wolves, so they do good. The theme is language, or sound. Jacopo has switched to good rulers, whom he compares to barking dogs, and impious and unjust men, whom he compares to wolves. Peter Comestor, whom Jacopo praises as “*maximus doctor*,” tells a long story, quoted at length, concerning Philip of Macedon, a siege of Athens, and wolves and dogs. Once again the source is unclear, but Jacopo is clearly following a chain of reasoning where one story prompts another, no matter how far it might take him from his ostensible subject. When Jacopo himself realizes this, he concludes that good judges are necessary and useful, an unexceptional view, that they too are good dogs of God, and that avaricious judges are like Judas, who sold Jesus out of greed.¹⁰¹ Since Jesus was the truth (John 14:6), Judas was in a sense doubly damned as an avaricious traitor. As we have seen, Judas was a person to whom Jacopo’s mind frequently turned. The simplicity of Judas’s motive here is revealing of how Jacopo saw his role and his base motive.

A story from Valerius Maximus, possibly known directly by Jacopo, about Scipio’s opinion on a greedy and a poor official ratified the opinion that neither was suitable because they would both steal as much as possible.¹⁰² Avaricious rulers were worse than demons in Jacopo’s opinion. He proves this point by deploying a line of argument already used in his sermons deriving from Gregory the Great on Job.¹⁰³ The devil’s real aim was not his material possessions but his soul. Bad rulers wanted these temporal things and oppressed people to extort money and even corrupt their souls. In this sense they were worse than demons, because they cared only for themselves. It is a pity Jacopo had no concrete contemporary or local example to offer his readers. Instead, his mind turned to ancient Rome and its republic. Genoa called itself a republic and once had consuls. Rome mattered to the Genoese as the only model of government remotely relevant to their situation. Jacopo was at a complete loss to find any relevant biblical advice to a commune.

Most of what Jacopo knew about republican Rome he learned from one of his favorite books, Augustine’s *City of God*, but like many readers before

101. CG, 144–45, for this and what follows; the key phrase is “*Judas igitur vedendo Christum, vendidit veritatem*.” The expression may be original to Jacopo as a search of the Brepols Cross Database turned up nothing like this (accessed May 20, 2013). Jacopo credits Jerome with a connection between a love of money and the greed of Judas, but no one has found a source for this. I think Jacopo credited Jerome as a safe bet for any idea he could not really remember and did not think his own, or did not want to own.

102. CG, 145.

103. CG, 146, Jacopo thinking for himself here.

the age of detailed indices, he had to rely on his memory, not always accurate, to draw useful and relevant examples from this vast work.¹⁰⁴ The basic lesson Jacopo drew from Rome here is that a rich state is best served by poor officials who remain so while in office. Additionally, the Romans were inclined to prefer rulers already sufficiently wealthy to be satisfied, even to the point of themselves remaining poor. Jacopo is here dreaming of a *popolo* content to trust the wealthy and powerful families like the Doria and Spinola, and not be greedy and rise against the regime, another oblique reference to the unmentionable reforms of Guglielmo Boccanegra. Jacopo believes bad rulers pervert justice, but his example is Nero, here boiled in gold in hell. This Nero sees a great crowd of judges and lawyers and invites them to join him.¹⁰⁵ Gold took Jacopo to the story of Midas, which he claims to have from Ambrose.¹⁰⁶ All that Jacopo knew about the Greeks he must learn from some Latin source. Jacopo leaves the impression here that he has exhausted his theme of greedy and avaricious rulers in a fog of ancient stories hardly relevant to Genoa in the 1290s. Perhaps the problem was that the avarice of rulers was not a congenial theme in an official history of Genoa at this time, by this author.

Citizens and Inhabitants

Jacopo wraps up his account of government by looking at last at Genoa's people, whom he accurately divides into citizens, men with property who matter, and inhabitants, everyone else. He asks how these people should behave, and he has three main topics: they should be discrete and mature, they should not be given to vices, and they should be zealous for the republic—in our term, patriotic. It becomes immediately apparent that for the first topic Jacopo is thinking about counselors, advisors, maybe the *anziani*, those men the republic and its executive relied upon for advice.¹⁰⁷ Jacopo seems to think that the word “discrete” defines itself, but we can turn to Benjamin Z. Kedar, who has looked carefully at the use of this and other words in late medieval Genoa.¹⁰⁸

104. CG, 146–49; Monleone has carefully sifted Jacopo's use of Augustine and other sources, and his errors.

105. CG, 148–49, another tangled story of attribution; Bertini Guidetti suggests it comes from Jacques de Vitry, who (erroneously) claims it comes from Seneca. Jacopo simply credits a philosopher, a suitably vague and unchallengeable reference.

106. CG, 149–50; no editor knows where Ambrose discusses this.

107. CG, 151–52, for this and what follows.

108. Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis: Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth-Century Depression* (New Haven, 1976), 92, for *discretus*, a quality of nobles and *popolo*, as not the later “prudence” or “caution” but “discernment.”

Discerning advisors seem to be a good thing, and Jacopo is much more interested in how this quality links up to larger questions about age. Since he was at least in his sixties when writing the chronicle, perhaps this is no surprise. Advisors should not be boys or decrepit, not youths, but mature men. Isidore explained this with reference to the temperature of blood. Temperate blood was clearly the best. When discussing age Jacopo decided to mention no numbers but was content to cite the Bible, which had a lot to say about wisdom coming with age (Job 12:12), honoring elders, and weighing words carefully (Prov. 21:28). There was of course a vast literature on the ages of man and definitions of the stages of life using numbers to demark them, but Jacopo has no use for this material here. What mattered to Jacopo was not the number of years but the quality of mind he saw as best in middle age.

Wise men weighed their thoughts and words, the difference between them and fools.¹⁰⁹ At issue here is not the anodyne generalization but how Jacopo illustrates it. Ecclesiasticus 21:29 taught that the fool has his heart in his mouth; he speaks emotionally and without forethought. Socrates also believed that to give (or take) speedy advice was to regret it later (but where he said this is unknown). Augustus Caesar expressed a similar sentiment as recorded by Suetonius in his book on the Caesars (Augustus 25, a work Jacopo rarely cited and probably had not read). Finally, the philosopher Varro also agreed, in this case Marcus T. Varro, another author probably unknown to Jacopo firsthand. He had used these same three examples years ago in a Lenten sermon, so we suspect they came to him from a florilegium or some kind of source filled with anecdotes arranged by subject.¹¹⁰ When it came to wise men and fools, Jacopo was content to regurgitate learned commonplaces. After all, one cannot plagiarize oneself.

Next, however, Jacopo states that the advisors should not be improvident but circumspect. The second word is another one Kedar examined in context, in his view one appearing more after the plague and signaling a sensible caution, a careful look around.¹¹¹ Jacopo was an early adopter of this word in a political context, and his examples are instructive. His theme is planning. The man wishing to build a tower (also evoking Babel here?) must have a plan and see it through. Good planning also involved perseverance, just as a king going to war must plan and have enough supplies to see the war

109. CG, 153–54, for this and what follows.

110. SQ, no. 269, pp. 404–5.

111. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis*, 90–94, where he notes that Giovanni Balbi (in the 1280s) “equates the circumspect with the cautious, the experienced, and the provident.”

through to victory; Jacopo learned these examples in Luke 14:28–30 and 14:31. He had other stories emphasizing the benefits of thinking ahead to the consequences of one's actions.¹¹²

The third temperament Jacopo recommends to citizens and counselors is that they should not be angry, but tranquil. His first sensible point is that angry people do not give good advice. Augustine also taught him that an angry and perturbed mind was according to all philosophers not a wise one.¹¹³ In Matthew 5:22 Jesus taught that one should not be angry with a brother without cause, and for Jacopo this was a better reason than philosophical arguments from Stoics about the dangers of anger. Jacopo seems to be familiar with anger as an observer of it, and a lifetime in Dominican and Genoese politics doubtless gave him experience in this matter. Of all the scriptural passages deprecating anger he has chosen the one that suggests anger with cause, which opens the door to a righteous anger in defense of God's honor, or probably Genoa's.

His fourth and most detailed injunction concerns morality.¹¹⁴ Advisors should have pure morals and not bad ones. The details will be important here, for what Jacopo presents reveals his hierarchy of moral and political values. Good political morality, or the central value of citizenship, was being just and prudent. The test of this value was not to engage in fraud, though Jacopo leaves unspecified exactly what might constitute fraud in this area. (Jacopo did not share with Machiavelli the value that politics had its own morality.) Citizenship required the opposite of fraud, so imprudence and injustice were to be deprecated. This thought brought Jacopo directly to his next theme, that advisors should hate cruelty. What Jacopo means by cruelty is apparent in his choice of examples.¹¹⁵ Haman from the book of Esther was a biblical archetype of cruelty. Jacopo learned from Orosius, "a great historian," the story of the cruel Greek tyrant Phalaris, which he also used in a sermon. Above all, to Jacopo Caiaphas embodied both cruelty and evil counsel in the advice he gave the Jews about Jesus.

Noble and famous citizens (Jacopo has left behind the *popolo*) if subjected to vice cannot be rational but are brutes, not free but slaves, not virile but soft and effeminate. Jacopo explains these contrasts in detail, and for brevity let us consider the one that will loom large in the next chapter and is first alluded to

112. CG, 154, a long story Bertini Guidetti (Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 180) identified as borrowed from Stephen of Bourbon, or perhaps some common source for both of them.

113. CG, 155, for reference to *City of God* 9.4, and for what follows.

114. CG, 157–58, largely a long quotation from Ambrose, *De Officiis*.

115. CG, 158–60.

here: the contrast between free and slave.¹¹⁶ In John 8:34 Jesus made one of the clearest biblical statements that sinners were slaves to sin, and this was a terrible state. In 2 Peter 2:19 Peter made the same point about a slavery to corruption resulting from sin. A final example, one Jacopo had used in several sermons, concerned the encounter between Alexander the Great and Diogenes, when the latter asked Alexander to stop blocking the sun. This famous ancient anecdote is making a surprising appearance in a history of Genoa explaining how vice-ridden nobles are irrational. We are entitled to ask what we learn about Jacopo by his use of this example when there were so many other ancient exempla about valuing freedom over slavery. In the lengthy discussion medieval writers had gradually worked up between the philosopher and the king, Diogenes has become a kind of holy hermit, the free man who has power and free speech and wants nothing from the richest and most powerful man in the world, who is in fact not as free as he thinks. What is at issue here is reversal, in today's words speaking truth to power. Among their many other liabilities, slaves did not have the right to free speech.

Jacopo takes up a series of stories about Alexander illustrating his good and bad qualities. Plainly Alexander was a figure "good to think with" for Jacopo: he was a remote pagan not tangled up in the complexities of Roman history, so a thoroughly pre-Christian character. Alexander was, however, also filled with vices, and Jacopo mentions anger, violence, and lust.¹¹⁷ Jacopo does not specify what he has in mind about Alexander's lust, but since the next story is about a soft and effeminate Pythagoras who spends too much time with women, the moral is clear. Such men are to Jacopo like pigs in muck (another echo of 2 Pet. 2:22), his own sexist conclusion buttressed by his reading of biblical examples ranging from Samson to Solomon. The odd thing is that Jacopo must have sensed that whatever Alexander's moral problems were, spending too much time with women was not among them. Since Jacopo will eventually go so far as to compare Alexander to Solomon in their capacities to take good advice, we should not be surprised to see him smoothing over some of Alexander's moral complexities. It is again revealing that Jacopo has no more recent examples than these.

Jacopo's last major theme concerns the zeal that citizens should have for their republic, what we have called patriotism. Once again Jacopo will display a formidable grasp of Roman history in illustrating these themes, and we need not follow him in every detail. Let us observe that Jacopo begins

116. CG, 161.

117. CG, 164–65, for this point and examples.

with a theme that also appeared in some of his sermons. He was clearly intrigued by situations in which fathers took up arms against their sons, and vice versa, in the name of a higher value, in this instance love of country. In faction-ridden Genoa this may have occurred, but Jacopo locates his examples in a safely remote past. Mostly he draws on his favorite author, Augustine, for observations on this theme by Cicero, a writer I do not think he had read.¹¹⁸

Let us look closely at one concept Jacopo proposes here, his idea that it is better for a republic to grow by morals and greatness of spirit than by riches, more people, or more military men.¹¹⁹ Jacopo knew very well that his Genoa, at the peak of its prosperity and power in the 1290s, had grown wealthy through overseas expansion from nearby Corsica to distant Caffa and Chios and that its great merchant warriors were admirals like Benedetto Zaccaria, and men like him had led the way. The path he describes as not the best one was in fact the one Genoa had followed, even to the point of population increases leaving the city in Jacopo's time at its medieval high point. Jacopo believed that the Roman state (a pagan one) had at its best thrived as a result of the old virtues of strict morality and greatness of spirit, and his prime example of these was Cato, not the one who wrote a book for boys (the Elder) but the more famous one, the great philosopher among the Romans who sided with Pompey against Julius Caesar. When Cato the Younger saw that Caesar had won he killed himself, because Caesar was an enemy of the republic. Jacopo does not pause to consider the causal relation between these facts.

The most extreme case of intrafamilial strife was when a man took up arms against himself to defend a republic. Again, Jacopo does not use the word "suicide" to describe this act, as we have seen he probably did not know it. But we have observed before, in the cases of Judas, Herod, and Pilate, that the theme of suicide interested Jacopo as a historical and theological problem and also one complicating the history of martyrdom. Jacopo is praising Cato's suicide, even though he inherited a complex tradition about it. He certainly knew from Augustine that it was possible to scorn Cato and his death, which in a Christian context was a plain sin of self-murder.¹²⁰

118. CG, 170–74, where Jacopo also draws on Ambrose for his reading of Cicero.

119. CG, 177–80, for a long treatment of Cato, a figure very important to Jacopo.

120. See Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages: The Curse of Self Murder* (Oxford, 2000), 116–17, for Augustine on Cato's suicide, and 312 for Dante's positive view of Cato. In *Purgatorio* Dante's Cato rules, and his presence there is a guarantee that he too will eventually enter a Christian paradise, though he was a pagan suicide. Dante scholars have always wondered why Dante chose Cato for this role and why he had so positive an attitude toward him. Another reason to speculate about whether or not Dante knew Jacopo's work, or more likely *The City of God*.

Augustine was prepared to admit Cato's great virtue and his commitment to free speech.¹²¹ Jacopo agreed with this, but he does not mention Augustine's view of Cato's suicide as growing out of hatred and vanity.¹²²

Jacopo read the excerpt from the speech Sallust wrote for Cato, the master of all truth, as explaining how just government and free speech built Rome and its empire. This idea provoked a rare contemporary allusion in this section to "modern citizens," "cives moderni," who are more abundant in arms, horses, people, and riches than the ancients had.¹²³ Cato is the source of this contrast; he was comparing the late and falling republic to the pristine virtue of the modest early one. Jacopo knows that "modern" refers to Cato's time, but inevitably also his own. And yet the ancients governed their republic better than "moderns" managed the richer and more powerful one. Just as Cato looked back to a largely mythic past that Augustine sensibly dismissed as in no real way superior in morals to his own time, Jacopo looked back to the heroic crusading Genoa in the early twelfth century—smaller, poorer, but better, very like Dante's view of Florentine history (*Paradiso*, 15:97–108). Jacopo infers this by reversing what Cato decried as examples of recent political corruption. In doing so Jacopo gives the first sign that he is looking forward to his own next great section on family and domestic matters, so unusual a subject for a city chronicle. Rather than arms, horses, people, and riches, Jacopo singles out for praise the industrious citizen presiding over a well-ordered household.¹²⁴ He approvingly cites Paul (1 Tim. 5:8) that a person who does not take care of his own house denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Jacopo is astute enough to draw a line between the house (household) that could be in order while the family was not. He sees that a person whose domestic life is disordered is in no position to take up office in a republic.

Jacopo's choice of a domestic problem or sign of disorder is a revealing one. He picks up from a number of possible sources the troubles of the ancient philosopher Gorgias, who had a bad wife and a beautiful slave woman.¹²⁵ This was a stock situation with disastrous possibilities; there was no peace with a wife and a beautiful enslaved woman in the house. This was

121. Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge, 1998), 210–11, also drawing on Sallust, another author not read by Jacopo.

122. *Ibid.*, 35–36.

123. *CG*, 178–80, for Jacopo's analysis of this Catonian theme as relevant to his own time.

124. *CG*, 180–81.

125. *CG*, 180–81; he could have learned this directly from Jerome whom he cites, or from Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Doctrinale*.

a situation common enough in late thirteenth-century Genoa, for sure. Why is Jacopo wrapping up his discussion of good government and patriotism with this story? As noted, he may be thinking of laying the groundwork for his next topic—domestic life. When Jacopo thought about a regular family life as the best guide to which people were most suited for office, he had been thinking about issues that divided families to the point of violence, suicide, and female slaves. The ostensible civic virtues he summarized in his last pages, morality and free speech not muzzled by bribes, worked against the lies so often at the root of sin and bad government. But it seems to me that what was really on Jacopo's mind was the threat of factionalism degenerating into civic strife dividing families. Hovering over this somber threat were more subtle forms of violence, almost unmentionable. Violence turned against oneself for political reasons could not be classed in the same category as the suicide of Judas. The violence needed to sustain slavery in Genoa, from acquiring children in the East to having sex in Genoa resulting in offspring, produced exactly the kind of sinners ruling Genoa.

Jacopo was not a political man, and at this point he seems ready to turn his attention from the sin, strife, and violence of Genoese history to the more congenial themes of private and spiritual life. Before evaluating his overall purpose and work as a historian, let us explore how a founder of social history discovered his subject.

CHAPTER 5

Genoa's Own Historian

The remarkable ninth section of Jacopo's chronicle concerns family matters.¹ Jacopo's analysis here makes him in my view the father of social history, a strong claim I plan to prove. Even though marriage, children, and servants and slaves are natural themes for an archbishop, to place them in a history, as integral subjects, was new. Jacopo has never received the attention for his accomplishment that he deserved, and part of the problem is that he buried this section in a place where readers would not think to look. His sermons revealed a deep interest in family life, but there the context was the Christian faith and he stood in the middle of a long and rich tradition of preaching on this topic. We have seen that Jacopo had mixed and misogynist views on women, and they are alas the principal subject here. Jacopo had no predecessor, except possibly Martin of Troppau, who inserted these matters in a historical work, not as digressions, but as a vital part of the way he conceived of Genoa. Certainly the Genoese annalists of the previous two centuries were no models for this radical departure. Annals privileged wars and politics, and

1. I have considered this section before in "Una Storia Genovese: la Cronaca di Iacopo," in *Il Paradiso e la Terra: Iacopo da Varazze e il suo tempo*, ed. Stefania Bertini Guidetti (Florence, 2001), 83–93, and over the last fifteen years have been looking in vain for a similar thirteenth-century historian who addresses "de re familiari" in such detail. Here I approach this material with a fresh start.

even these standard subjects did not always fall into neat year-by-year patterns, as Thucydides knew well. We must look closely to see if Jacopo understood a dynamic to family life, change over time, or whether he portrayed it in a timeless, prescriptive way. Slavery is also the test of his thinking here, because although it appeared in the Bible, church fathers, and pagan Roman history, its roles in Genoese society and economy were rapidly changing. One great test of a historian is whether or not he or she actually understands and explains the processes and meanings of human change. A mere catalog of banal comments on the family will not suffice to make Jacopo its first true historian.

Jacopo divides his treatment of the family and the household into six sub-headings.² They are (1) what kind of wife is the best, (2) how to take care of her, (3) marital love, (4) living together peacefully, (5) parents and children, and (6) servants and slaves. Ephesians 5:22–6:4, frequently cited in this section, likely inspired Jacopo to see paternal authority in the Christian family as it relates to a wife, child, or slave.³ As usual he elaborated at length on these verses and became an original thinker on the subject. Like many of the best modern historians of the medieval family, he understood that the household, the people living together under one roof, was the most profitable way to investigate domestic life in all its complexity.⁴ Though most of the people studied will be women and slaves, the patriarchal gaze dominates, a curious one from a celibate priest. As we will see at the end of this chapter, Jacopo was embedded in a large Genoese family and had been listening to confessions and preaching on marriage for decades. He is an excellent, if biased, witness to kinship and family life in Genoa.

Selecting Wives

To begin with the question of how to pick a wife by naturally seeking the best kind is to presume a big context for the state of marriage in Genoa and more broadly in thirteenth-century Europe. If wives rarely picked husbands, Jacopo did not care. The remarriage of widows was not a subject Jacopo chose for preaching. Genoese men, in the words of a testator, thought a widow should remain “a good wife without a husband.” Selecting a wife presumes the male

2. CG, 183.

3. CG cites Eph. 6:5–6 on slaves (212), 6:1 on sons (209–10), 6:4 on parents (208), and 5:25 on loving wives (a favorite verse of Jacopo’s, 194). Jacopo does not take up the question raised in Titus 2:4–5 about the duties of older to younger women; he almost never considers women as autonomous from men.

4. The same approach in David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

point of view, either the prospective husband or father-in-law. Since this issue closely follows the long section on citizenship, we should not be surprised to see how neatly Jacopo transitions from this subject to marriage.⁵ Citizens should not simply tend to their states and public duties; they must also rightly order the affairs of their families and households. Jacopo was not the first writer (or the last) to see the connection between strong families and a vibrant republic. Not to belabor the point, previous political historians, if they observed this at all, or considered the converse that weak, disordered, corrupt families were bad omens for civil society, did not go into detail on these moralizing judgments. Jacopo will not be brief. Also, he is sure that the cornerstone of family life for a citizen is to have a good wife. We are entitled to wonder why he believes this, or where he learned it. As an unmarried man, he nevertheless believed that it was not good for a man to be alone, and not all of them could or should be Dominicans. His intended audience for these matters must extend well beyond the clergy to literate laymen who understood enough Latin and who ruled Genoa, or as lawyers and notaries served the rulers.

By now the habits of the preacher should come as no surprise to us. Jacopo takes up two themes from the book of Proverbs, ideas he had used before in a number of sermons. The Bible inspired him, not whatever scraps he may have heard thirdhand from Xenophon. First, a good wife builds the *casa* (house, but by extension household) and a bad wife destroys it (Prov. 14:1). Jacopo has done several things to this saying from Solomon, no stranger to marriage. What he has done above all is rewrite it; scripture says Wisdom builds the house and Folly tears it down. Wisdom in Proverbs (and Latin) is feminine, but Jacopo turns her into a wife. Second, man gets his patrimony from his parents, but his wife from God (Prov. 19:14). Here Jacopo closely follows the original, except that the Bible says the Lord provides a prudent wife. If so, then what was the point of studying how to choose one? Jacopo is emphasizing that they all, good, bad, or indifferent, come from God. This is a somber thought, especially in a nondivorcing culture. Even more interesting is the theory of wealth on offer here. The Genoese, like all peoples, inherited the wealth of their parents, but in their mercantile economy many people used this capital effectively and greatly increased it. (Some of course did not.) Where wealth was in fixed capital like land, what one inherited was bound to be the basis of a patrimony. But there was another source, which Jacopo perfectly knew. Genoa was a dowry culture where brides came with

5. CG, 183–84, for this and what follows.

wealth reflecting their social station, and the proverbial dowerless girls faced the prospect that no one would marry them. (In fact wealthy Genoese men and women left money in their wills to enable poor women to marry.) Men acquired wealth, in cash and other items, in the carefully drawn up and preserved marriage contracts that proliferate in the city's notarial records. The documents of these negotiations provide the outcome but alas do not shed light on the bargaining resulting in the agreed upon sum, which the husband had the right to use and if prudent himself profit by it. Jacopo does not want to bring dowry into his discussion at this point, even though everyone knew it was the context for evaluating patrimony and its sources.

Jacopo directs his readers toward another path by pointing out that when a man is considering taking a wife he should diligently inquire about her habits (*moribus*, also morals) and her social status (*conditio*). This status may be an oblique nod to her father's wealth and hence the amount of dowry the bridegroom might expect. But Jacopo balances this calculation against valuing a woman's character; here they are equal components to a good marriage. In this Jacopo is following a model he greatly respected, the famous preacher John Chrysostom, who in an elegant homily on Matthew offered his advice on how to select a good wife.⁶ One of the benefits of having written over seven hundred sermons and probably delivering many more is that Jacopo knew how to build on the work of previous stars. He was not going to find this sort of material in the writings of previous historians. Jacopo makes this material his own, so we can follow him in how he explains the process.

The first thing that Jacopo advises is to look to her age. It is a fact that the Genoese marriage contracts never supply ages, but we know, as well as contemporaries, that the size of the dowry was a proxy of sorts for the age of the bride. Just as in fifteenth-century Florence, dowries increased in order to entice men to marry women in their midtwenties as they lingered in the marriage market (or entered convents), past the most desirable age in the late teens.⁷ This model held for the kind of citizens Jacopo had in mind, not

6. CG, 184–85, for Monleone's hard work in finding Jacopo's ultimate source, Chrysostom, whose influence on medieval clerical writers on marriage is worth further study. See Christopher Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford, 1989) for a discussion of the ecclesiastical model of marriage, but no notice of Jacopo.

7. See Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 144–45, for tables of ages of marriage, and the entire study is a valuable study of sources unique to Florence. Diane Owen Hughes, "Urban Growth and Family Structure in Medieval Genoa," *Past and Present* 66 (1975): 3–28, and "Kinsmen and Neighbors in Medieval Genoa," in *The Medieval City*, ed. Harry A. Miskimin, David Herlihy, and Adam L. Udovitch (New Haven, 1977), 95–111, remain fundamental.

the *popolo* whose dowries were smaller (but still vital to the family). These men were not called upon to govern Genoa. Needless to say, the age of the husband does not appear as an issue, nor does Jacopo at any time address second or third marriages, even though they were common enough in Genoa, especially for men.

Next, Jacopo says the prospective groom should look to her parents, on the reasonable grounds that one can judge the fruit from the tree.⁸ This metaphor of nature was biblical and folkloric wisdom, but not in the scholastic reasoning Jacopo proceeds to apply to it. If both were good, all was well. If both were bad, one should forget about marriage. Now if one were good and one bad, the prospective husband should be careful, but it is more worrying if it is the mother who is bad, for the daughter is more likely to take after her than the father anyway. This bit of a theory of inheritability was straight from Chrysostom, but Jacopo had used it before in sermons, and it made sense especially in Genoa where noble men and rich merchants often spent considerable time away from their families, who were left in charge of their wives, as well as the city's ubiquitous widows. It may have been the case that even the boys would be more like their mothers, but that was not important here. Jacopo does not mention one of his favorite passages from Proverbs, that a wise son was a joy to his father, while a foolish son is his mother's bane (Prov. 10:1). He was not discussing the characteristics of future husbands, which he has in a way already discussed as exactly the qualities of a good citizen. Since Genoese government excluded women from any political role, this parallel did not apply to them. Yet there again, the mother's sorrow might very well partly derive from the general assumption that she was responsible for the failings of her children.

Jacopo also shared Chrysostom's view that a man should not look for riches from a marriage or beauty in a wife. Avarice prompted one and lust the other. Rather, it was better to look to her morals, the values here being that she was honest, wise, and discrete. (Again the two last qualities differ.) Jacopo considers riches first, which must mean the dowry and/or the prospect of a fat inheritance. He takes from Jerome a saying from the philosopher Theophrastus, who said that it was not wise to marry a rich woman because she would seek to dominate the household and her husband.⁹ As Solomon also warned, it was better to live in the corner of a house (to be poor) than with a quarrelsome wife in a big house (Prov. 21:9, also in sermons). Jacopo

8. CG, 184–85, on this topic.

9. CG, 185–86, for the theme of wealth.

puts a gloss on this; it is better to listen to the chirping of sparrows on the roof than to live with a nagging wife. This seems reasonable enough at first glance, but what does it mean? In Genoa the higher up one was in buildings, the farther away were the smells and muck of the streets. Sparrows in song were more pleasant than bawling wives. But it is not clear how these birds became proxies for simplicity or at least a lack of avarice. Jacopo understood well enough the pecuniary motives behind so many Genoese marriages.

Returning directly to the theme of money, Jacopo cites an anecdote concerning Themistius of Paphlagonia, who said that he would rather give his daughter to a man who needs money but is honorable than to a rich man of bad character, and that he would rather give a daughter than money to a poor man.¹⁰ In this context Jacopo inserts a father and his concerns about what sort of husband his decision would provide for the daughter. Again, no one is thinking that the daughter has any choice in the matter. The father knew as well as Jacopo did that when the father gave a daughter to a future son-in-law he was also providing a dowry. I think the point here is that this poor man, presumably of good character, would benefit from a wife at least as much as he would from the value of the dowry. Giving only money, even to a virtuous man, would accomplish less. Such were the lessons Genoese society taught Jacopo.

Jacopo next argued that one should not marry for beauty; this was a mistake he attributed to youth.¹¹ Presumably discrete older men were interested in other qualities in a wife. In fact it was dangerous to marry for looks, for as Solomon observed, beauty is a false grace and a vanity (Prov. 31:30). A woman who fears God is to be praised and valued more. Jacopo next evokes an image from Proverbs 11:22 he used at least three times in sermons: a gold ring in the nose, a beautiful and stupid woman. Scripture made it plain that the gold ring was in the nose of a pig, and Jacopo's misogynist tendencies did not take him that far in this case. For him the gold ring in the nose was a proxy for beauty, but whether or not Christian Genoese women were into this kind of piercing is not clear. But it is his own idea that when a woman was stupid and ugly, she was no threat because no one would want her. When she was beautiful and wise, that was also not a problem,

10. Monleone knew that Jacopo had used this story in a Sunday sermon. Stefania Bertini Guidetti (Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca della città di Genova dalle origini al 1297* [Genoa, 1995], 204) traces it back to Valerius Maximus, but other medieval writers like William of Conches had already used it. The problem is how such a story became attached to a fourth-century AD philosopher.

11. *CG*, 187–89, for this and what follows.

for reasons he did not elaborate; presumably everyone would want her. It is important to keep in mind that Jacopo has by this point suitably settled the question of money and marriage, so here the dowry is presumed, even for the most undesirable spouse, considered off the marriage market. Whether or not this was actually the case in thirteenth-century Genoa is unknown.

When a prospective wife was beautiful and stupid, Jacopo compared that to the stink of garbage coming from a source pleasing to the eye. Perhaps it is not surprising that this intellectual liked this image and also used it in sermons. Again from Theophrastus, coming to him via Jerome or some other intermediary source, Jacopo considers the question of whether a man should marry a beautiful or ugly woman. To state the choice in this way was to reduce everything about a woman to this one trait, which he had already dismissed as vanity and hence superficial. His resolution of this dilemma follows a conventional scholastic analysis. A beautiful woman was admired by all and hence harder to protect—Jacopo does not say from what but we can easily guess that they all wanted her and she might become a victim of violence. An ugly woman was despised by all (men?), and no one would want to see her (or have anything else to do with her). Hence the husband with a beautiful wife was always fearful, and the one with the ugly wife was sad. Where Jacopo learned this is anyone's guess. Before he said that no one would want an ugly wife, but it turns out that some ended up with one, perhaps for the unstated financial benefit always hovering over Genoese marriage. Inevitably the mean was the best: a wife not too beautiful so that the husband was not excessively preoccupied with her looks, and not so ugly that he was always worried about being discontented—this must be what sadness meant to Jacopo.

This moral reasoning does not place Jacopo in a good light, and maybe he sensed that these coarse views were unworthy of a preacher and archbishop, let alone the father of social history. Is this the benefit of a good university education and decades of reflection? Wrapping up this section, Jacopo reiterated that a husband should not look for riches or beauty (safer moral ground) but honest behavior. Taking another image from Proverbs (27:15), he compared a quarrelsome wife to a dripping roof leaking cold water on your bed—his addition to the biblical simile, as was the temperature of the water. He wanted to make sure his readers got the point, and perhaps the graphic image was the one a celibate man was in the best position to understand, alone in his bed. At this point educated medieval men seemed compelled to remember Socrates, and Jacopo credits Jerome and Seneca for the information that the philosopher, brilliant and ugly though he may have been, learned patience from the two wives who so persistently mistreated

him (Xanthippe and Myrto, the wives unnamed here).¹² This is one way to read the story, and it is at first glance an odd choice in a section in a chronicle about how to select a wife, especially since Athenian marriage practices were unknown to Jacopo. Yet as we have seen, this celibate theologian always noticed the wives of intellectuals. The entire idea of learned men selecting wives at all must have appeared novel to Jacopo. Socrates, admittedly ugly, poor, and a pagan, had not chosen wisely, but he was able to find the good in any situation and hence received lessons in patience (whether they stuck or not is unclear). The celibate too benefited from lessons on patience. This section on selecting a wife concluded by addressing the fact that there were many unhappy marriages, despite all the good advice and best intentions in the world. Perhaps recognizing this reality, Jacopo at least allowed his Genoese readers to find some solidarity with Socrates and take comfort in their common plight.

Taking Care of Wives

Continuing with his male perspective on marriage, Jacopo begins again with Chrysostom but goes way beyond his model to explain how wives were weaker than husbands, who needed to take care of them.¹³ (The fate of defenseless unmarried women did not concern Jacopo here.) His model supposed, and Jacopo agreed, that women were less cautious than men and hence rash. They were also more easily deceived, as Eve showed, and hence less prudent—a word, as we have seen, meaningful to our historian. Drawing probably on a sermon by Augustine, Jacopo claimed that men needed to supervise or to care (notice what “care” really means) for women in four ways. Women had to fear God, they required a vigilant husband, they should be afraid of the world, and they should fear the law. Men only had to fear God in order to avoid sin; it was obvious to Jacopo that the sex he viewed as stronger already had the other three qualities or duties. He illustrates these commonplaces with some of his favorite ideas and biblical passages. For example, a good reason for women to fear the world was the prospect of being detected in adultery, the theme of the first sermon we explored. This continuity in Jacopo’s thought is striking. Fearing the law benefited women because it would keep them from fornication. Needless to say, this was not a problem Jacopo noticed about men, except perhaps in their overall drive to avoid sin in general.

12. In *SD*, 39v, Jacopo cited Seneca as his authority on these wives.

13. *CG*, 190–93, for this and what follows.

Jacopo in his characteristic logically framed arguments thought that a good woman did not need to be protected and a man would not be able to safely guard a bad one. (This prospect might seem to leave men with little to do, but we must conclude that Jacopo viewed most women as not that good or that bad.) He shows this with a story he picked up from Jerome about a Roman consul. His unnamed spouse was the best of wives because she never told him about his awful breath since she thought all men smelled that way. This was a tribute to her virtue (never close enough to another man to smell his breath—a proper Roman wife) and presumably her prudence as well.¹⁴ This opinion about a good wife from a husband's perspective is remarkable for several reasons, but here because Jacopo could not find, or did not care to mention, any more recent (or Christian) example of such a spouse. Even if men could not completely prevent suspicious behavior by their wives, they could at least prevent worse evils, as in the case of the man with the fornicating wife, as mentioned by the prophet Hosea (2:6–7), an edifying but again a quite remote example.¹⁵

Jacopo concludes this section on taking care of wives by looking at the great mass of them in the middle, not completely worthy, but not entirely suspect. Again, his unstated premise, an unlikely hypothesis, is that the husbands were all avoiding sin and the ones in charge. Jacopo knew very well that some men were terrible husbands, but in his culture it was very hard for outsiders to control these people, or change them. But if we take his generic good husband as the model, Jacopo urges such men to work to make their wives worthy. Husbands could accomplish this, and here he chooses a remarkable passage from Ecclesiasticus (6:7) on how to do this: “When you gain a friend first test him, and be not too ready to trust him.” Many biblical passages extolled the qualities of a good wife and even estimated her price (above rubies, Prov. 31:10), but Jacopo, with these at his fingertips, instead compares marriage to friendship. Genoese men, connected and prospering by so many political and economic links, knew they had to forge bonds with men to whom they were not related by blood.¹⁶ As a member of the clergy as well as a family, Jacopo understood, say among his fellow Dominicans, how friendship worked. The best way Jacopo can think of for a man to care for his wife was to make her his friend. As we will see, this did not make her his equal. But it certainly put their relationship on an amicable

14. CG, 193; this story also appears in Vincent of Beauvais and in one of Jacopo's sermons, *SD*, 44v.

15. CG, 194.

16. See Quentin Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa* (Cambridge, 2009) where non-kinship-based trading networks are a major theme.

and emotional basis that one may not expect to see in the thirteenth century, long before the supposed appearance of companionate marriage in the sixteenth.

Marital Love

It is revealing about the way Jacopo thought about marriage that he made his transition to marital love from the emotional context of friendship. This love between husband and wife was necessary to sustain the family, which Jacopo saw as the basis for state and society. Paul made this very clear in Ephesians (5:25) when he enjoined men to love their wives as Christ loved the church. (We will have to wait to hear about the corresponding duties of wives—the advice here is to men.)¹⁷ How Jacopo analyzes this love in a Genoese milieu is startling. A husband should not fear his wife as a lord (*padrona*). Lordship in this view rested on fear to command obedience, and in Jacopo's mind it was unnatural for a man to fear his wife or to be subjected to her through this emotion. He does see love as the basis of the bond between lord and subject. Likewise, a husband should not subject his wife like a slave (*ancilla*—he knows very well what this word means in Genoa) but love her like a sister and a companion (*socia*)—what could be more like companionate marriage? Again, Jacopo knew well that love, or friendship, was not the basis of the tie between master and slave. By comparing a wife to a sister Jacopo tacitly excludes lust as the basis for such a relationship. He certainly understood the role of sex in marriage, as we will see, and this basis of companionship was simply not a subject he was going to address in the immediate context of friendship.

Jacopo explains himself with this reasoning. God did not make woman from a man's head to be his lord (*domina*) or from his feet to be his slave (*ancilla*) but from his side to be his equal and companion. Genoese men would have asked exactly what “equal” meant in this context, but Jacopo does not go into details. But if we follow his thoughts we will have some sense of the implicit meaning. The wife should love her husband as in Tobit (10:13), though oddly among the many pieces of good advice this wise man gave to Sarah, an explicit command to love her husband was not among them. But what he did urge was that wives should love and honor their in-laws and perhaps this sufficed to include the husband. The wife was also supposed

17. CG, 194–96, for this and what follows. Jacopo used the famous passage from Ephesians in several sermons.

to take the family in charge and govern the household, a wide sphere of domestic authority. Jacopo wants to get to the bottom of marital love. Men should love their wives wisely, and women perfectly love their husbands, and heartfelt love be expressed by both. This discrete male love was to be ordered and not excessive. Jacopo quotes Seneca on this, but since the passage appears in Jerome, Vincent of Beauvais, and probably other thirteenth-century authors Jacopo read, there is no reason to suppose that Jacopo had actually read Seneca. Both pagan and Christian ethics proposed that to love one's wife too much was to commit adultery. Whatever this might mean, it became the occasion for Jacopo to explain the role of sex in marriage—again, not a topic one ever finds in a city chronicle.

Jacopo transitions from immoderate love as a species of adultery to considering the proper times or reasons to abstain from marital sex, a list he credits to Chrysostom.¹⁸ Yet we must presume that this archbishop was well versed in the more recent canon law teaching on this subject. Jacopo first notes that couples should not have sex when to do so would be a mortal sin, as when the woman was menstruating; otherwise, the children might turn out blind, lame, or leprous. Jacopo suggests no mechanism or cause for these undesirable results, which should be blamed on the parents. Jacopo provides no reason for what he may have viewed as requiring none—no sex during pregnancy or birth. Third, Jacopo mentioned abstaining from sex at solemn religious feasts and days, and as the author of *The Golden Legend* and so many sermons, he knew well just how many of these there were. So he made clear that this was simply advice, not the law, though he presumably knew some canonists differed with him on this. Jacopo was no lawyer, but an experienced priest. Finally, Jacopo saw that it was sometimes necessary to abstain from conjugal sex in order to guard against mortal sin. He knew this claim required more of an explanation. Sometimes sex was not at all sinful, sometimes it was mortal, and sometimes it was very mortal. (Again, this last distinction about mortal sin's degrees of deadliness would have puzzled some canonists and theologians, but Jacopo in my view was trying to be realistic and humane.) Jacopo took the standard approach that sex was not sinful when the couple intended to have children, and it was a venial sin when the intention was to satisfy lust. Jacopo took the first point from Gregory the Great and the second from Paul.¹⁹ Sex in marriage was a

18. CG, 196, and for the contemporary canon law on this matter, see James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), 364–68.

19. CG, 196–98, for this and what follows. Jacopo here means Paul in 1 Cor. 7, compressing a long teaching on marriage and virginity.

mortal sin when the lust was excessive, either for a man's wife or some other woman. Who Jacopo had in mind as the other woman is not stated, but he was a realist and he probably had in mind slaves or prostitutes. The sin was most mortal when the husband used his wife improperly, against nature. Jacopo does not specify exactly what he means here, but let us say simply any form of sex not intended to produce children, or technically heterosexual sodomy. We have seen that Jacopo had strong views on this subject between men, but he does not call sodomy what he has in mind here. He cites Augustine as supporting the view that whatever this sex against nature was, it was bad enough with a prostitute, let alone a wife. Relations with a prostitute constituted adultery, but there was something even worse about these unmentionable activities.

Finally, Jacopo turns to the perfect love women owed their husbands, and there is no hint here of any unnatural demands she may place on her husband, or in fact any hint that female lust existed. Jacopo did not go into details but was content to insert a long quotation from Chrysostom, a sign of agreement and that he had nothing new to say. He also wanted to explain precisely what he meant by heartfelt love on the part of the husband and wife, what we might call conjugal love. The wife should love the man because she comes from a place near to his heart—an old idea but still interesting in this historical context. In turn the man puts a ring on the fourth finger because that is where the vein from the heart arrives.²⁰ This is a precious piece of confirming evidence about something we know from other sources, the relatively recent use of a wedding ring in later thirteenth-century Genoa (and elsewhere).²¹ Jacopo was a literal thinker, and it is not surprising that his idea of heartfelt love would find its roots in the physical human heart.

Domestic Tranquility

In the section on the bishops of Genoa, as Jacopo explains the city's supporting Pope Gregory VII during the Investiture Contest, he inserts a story about a powerful and wealthy man who is pursued by ravenous mice and eventually eaten by them.²² When Jacopo was thinking about a way

20. CG, 198; Monleone thinks this medical lore comes from physicians.

21. An early reference in a will of Virdina, November 22, 1264, in ASG, CN, Cart N. 61, 205v, "anulum sponsalium" left to the niece of her late husband; she had no daughters.

22. CG, 278–79, for this and what follows. Monleone did not know the source for this story. Bertini Guidetti (Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 270) found it in Martin of Troppau.

to introduce the turmoil in Europe as a result of papal schism, he evoked a plague of mice eating someone out of house and home. Closer to home, Jacopo understood the costs to Genoa of its periodic bouts of revolt and civil strife, dividing its house against itself. For these reasons I think Jacopo inserted in his chronicle a section on husbands and wives living peacefully together because such concord served as an apt model for how the Genoese might achieve harmony in their city.

Ecclesiasticus 25:1–2 has wisdom praising three things pleasing to God, “harmony among brethren, friendship among neighbors, and the mutual love of husband and wife”—the last his theme here.²³ Jacopo knows Augustine offered the same view (in his commentary on Psalms) that when couples quarreled there was turmoil in the house. Everyone seemed to assume that such fighting was a contest for supremacy in the household. Jacopo draws the lesson that when the woman dominates and subjugates the man, a perverse peace results. The other way around was a correct peace in Jacopo’s habitual patriarchal way of thinking. But he was aware that it was possible to go beyond this winner-take-all game. When husband and wife rightly agreed, it resulted in a peace pleasing to God and people. Sometimes they evilly agreed (a kind of marital criminal conspiracy), whether by fault of the husband, wife, or both of them. Jacopo presumes this outcome pleases no one. But he was interested in puzzling out how something good in theory, agreement or harmony, could end up sinful. He found the man guilty if, for example, he was too harsh or austere to his wife, reminding his readers again of Paul’s injunction to men to love their wives and to not be bitter toward them (in this instance he cites Col. 3:19). It was the fault of the wife, for example, when she was too quarrelsome (*rixosa*) or jealous (*zelotipa*). Jacopo does not consider any motives behind these responses but instead cites a long comment by Jerome to the effect that sometimes a man had a wife who was sweetness outside the house but inside faulty in exactly these ways. When the husband threw this wife out of the house the neighbors would criticize him, for as far as they knew she was a fine and gracious wife. So the husband stuck out his foot and showed his beautiful shoe that in fact pinched him. The same was true of his wife. (Jacopo liked this story and also used it in a sermon.)

But Jacopo was a realist, and he seems to think it was more likely that there was enough blame to go around in such marriages. Perhaps he learned this from his own family or from listening to decades of confessions. So he

23. CG, 199–200, for this and what follows.

returns to his original premise, that a house in great turmoil had a too severe husband and a too quarrelsome wife. In order to explain a proper and harmonious marriage he uses the following image, possibly his own.²⁴ Jacopo compares marriage to forging together two pieces of iron. Genoa had smiths active in producing weapons, armor, and tools, so this sight must have been familiar to him, as well as to his readers. Both pieces of metal needed to be softened first by the fire's heat before they could be united. When both were hard, they could not be forged. Hence only when they were properly softened, when the husband was benevolent and the woman obedient, would there be a good marriage. He was not content with this compromise and so he probed deeper into the logical pairings of hardness and softness in husband and wife. When they were both hard the marriage was doomed. When the man was too strict and the wife gentle or the reverse, when the wife was proud and the man gentle, they would not unite peacefully. Only when they were tender to one another would they please God and have a good union.

Jacopo did not leave the topic with this harmless and traditional advice, and it is a credit to him that he noted that there was a problem when a woman had a case against her husband, when he was a fornicator, in marriage the sin of adultery. For whatever reason, even though he has cited before cases of unfaithful wives from the Bible, he does not consider this possibility for Genoa, maybe because men told him their wives never strayed. Also, when Jacopo thought of one occasion for harmony breaking down in a marriage, he thought of infidelity by the husband and not his drunkenness or spousal abuse. This conclusion may also result from practical experience. Jacopo explains the four ways a wife might help her husband be saved from this sin, and he makes a long case following Augustine's fifty homilies. In brief the wife's first recourse was to warn her husband with understanding and sweetness (charity) that his conduct imperiled both his body and soul.²⁵ If this kindly speech and warning failed to have any results, the wife was within her rights to reprove her husband. Jacopo presumes that his wife should endure his lesser failings with patience, but in this case, where her husband's soul was at stake (and in no other case

24. *CG*, 201; it had also appeared previously in *SD*, 221r.

25. *CG*, 201–3, enhanced by the fruits of Jacopo's own experiences as a priest and archbishop. This procedure echoes the command of Jesus in *Matt.* 18:15–17 on how to reprove a brother, suitably altered for a married couple, yet omitting the stage of speaking to the husband in the presence of witnesses. For heretics, a first and second admonishment sufficed, *Tit.* 3:10. Unfortunately, no church court records survive in Genoa to compare to this framework of marital dispute resolution.

of sin?), she should rebuke him. One of Jacopo's consistent themes about marriage, across his sermons and in the chronicle, was that the wife needed to study patience, and he was no doubt correct that thirteenth-century Genoese wives needed this temperament in abundance.

Jacopo knew very well (along with Augustine) that these first two strategies did not always work. In this event the wife should ask for the church to intervene, placing the responsibility on the bishops and prelates. Jacopo does not go into any details about this, but he must have in mind a woman turning to her parish priest or some other cleric in the first instance. Again, the wife is obligated to do this because of her duty to help save her husband's soul, and this type of informing must have been something Genoese husbands needed to consider before behaving the way they did. It is revealing that the one thing about this situation Jacopo discusses is the possibility that her first request would not work. He does not explain what he means by this outcome. Presumably the first clerical responder took the infidelity up with the husband but nothing changed. This person had no lever to apply to the husband's conscience except a fear of hell, and apparently it was often not enough. So then it was the job of the bishop who had the authority to punish the erring husband in public. Jacopo is writing about his own duties here, and we must presume that if he saw this public act as part of his responsibilities, then he sometimes took this course. What a bishop in this case actually did was not clear, but he could exclude the husband from the church or publicly excommunicate him. It is a somber fact that Jacopo recognizes that even this may not change the husband. Genoa had endured a collective papal excommunication for years in the 1260s as a result of the commune's staunch support of the Byzantine emperor against the Venetians and Latins in the process of losing the Latin Empire at Constantinople. So some Genoese men had experienced and survived (at least in this world) enduring church censure, though it must be noted that the churches in Genoa loyally stood with their people against the papacy in this matter. Still, Jacopo's fourth piece of advice to these wives was to take their case directly to God (through prayer, although he certainly already knew all about their problem). Indeed, the entire Trinity should be petitioned. Jacopo has nothing more to say on this subject. Perhaps he found divine justice to be comforting and inevitable if his own efforts to help the wife did not succeed. The wife too had to look to heaven for her consolation, and the husband was doomed unless changed through the worthy prayers of his spouse, a logical if not frequent outcome. It is revealing that this burden of turning informant and the obligation of prayer fell on the wife alone, and not on their other relatives or children.

This theoretical understanding of marriage addressed the circumstances of many but not all Genoese, as Jacopo knew. A childless couple, Simone the draper and his wife Jacobina, made wills on the same day, September 24, 1264.²⁶ Since Jacobina's dowry was a substantial L215, they were wealthy *popolo*. Simone wanted to be buried in the church of San Giovanni di Capodarena, Jacobina at San Siro. This curious decision may reflect troubles beneath the surface. Jacobina's testament did not mention her husband, left a great deal of money to charity, and also bequeathed to Simone's natural daughter L15. Simone did not mention this offspring in his own will. This does not appear to be a model family. The archbishop wrote about the norm of marriage, but many Genoese men and women were not married. On September 11, 1275, Martino da Pegli made a will because he planned to go to sea and travel around the world.²⁷ A single man, Martino left much money to charity and named as his heir his sister Giovannina, a nun, hence also unmarried. Another bachelor, Oberto Amoroso, wanted his house not to be sold but instead rented, and the income used to provide dowries for virgins and poor girls as it seemed best to his trustees; he described this bequest remarkably as an "elemosina perpetua," in effect a precocious charitable foundation or trust.²⁸ This pious man, who named as his heirs the poor of Christ, implemented the message that marriage was the basis of society. Finally the will of Rollando de Castruono, drawn up on June 11, 1272, reveals the complexities of married life.²⁹ At this time Rollando was twice widowed and married to his third wife. He had one son surviving from each marriage, and they were his principal heirs. Rollando also freed by testament his slave Giovannetta, placing on her the ordinary obligation to serve his wife for four years, at a paltry salary of five solidi per year. Rollando, for whatever reason, heeded the call to be married, again and again.

Parents and Children

Jacopo had very long ancient, biblical, patristic, and medieval traditions to draw upon when explaining how parents and children should relate. Our focus must remain on the presence of this material in a chronicle, and Jacopo's

26. ASG, CN, Cart N. 61, 136v–137r.

27. ASG, CN, Cart N. 37, 140r–v. The phrase is "volens navigare et mundum circuire."

28. ASG, CN, Cart N. 138, January 6, 1307; the operative phrase is "virgines et fancinas pauperes ubi ex melius videbitur in anima eorum." His trustees were to receive an annual fee for their work, and he ordered that in the second year the rent should enable a certain Jacoba to marry, called a "familiaris seu famula," possibly someone's mistress, maybe his?

29. ASG, CN, Cart. N. 37, 5r–v.

overall plan to explain how domestic harmony of all kinds fostered a peaceful commune. For Jacopo the Holy Family was always the touchstone of parental care. In a sermon he had noted the incident of the child Jesus lost in Jerusalem.³⁰ As he humanely understood the situation, Mary had thought the boy was with Joseph; he thought Jesus was with his mother. He begins with the basic obligation of the *paterfamilias* (we know Joseph is the ideal) but also the wife (Mary) to love their children, teach them good morals, correct their delinquencies, and love them wisely by loving God in the child, a sophisticated approach to the trust.³¹ Interestingly Jacopo cites Matthew 19:19 and the straightforward command by Jesus to love one's "proximus" as oneself, but here the word does not mean neighbor but one's kin, specifically children.³² In this Genoese mercantile milieu it is striking that Jacopo immediately turns to the problem of parental love going astray, and his first example is when the parents (presumably the father) commit usury or theft ostensibly for the love of their children. We know that Jacopo never tired of condemning usury, however he exactly defined it, but its companion here, theft, suggests that it was sinful gain. The archbishop claims that afterwards these deeds will result in the damnation of the children, a puzzling result he explains by deploying Ecclesiasticus (41:5–7): "A reprobate line are the children of sinners. . . . Children curse their wicked father, for they suffer disgrace through him." Jacopo takes this passage to mean that children curse an impious father because they are scorned because of him. The Latin Bible uses the word for hell and mentions the children of abomination here, clearly the inspiration for Jacopo's view that the children of usurers are damned, presumably because they were nurtured by these illicit gains. Whether this concomitant scorn is posthumous or not is not clear, but I think Jacopo means to say that these unfortunate children suffer a bad reputation in this world and condemnation in the next.

Inevitably, Jacopo next considers indifferent parental love, neither good nor bad. Jacopo has unconsciously(?) slid into talking about fathers and sons, whatever his original intentions were to subsume wives and daughters. More on this later. When a father's love causes him not to take notice of a son's evil, this is clearly bad love. When he fails to notice a son's grace, this is also an inadequate love. Jacopo sees a proper love as imitating the natural ties, as when

30. *SD*, 35r.

31. *CG*, 203–4. The bibliography on medieval childhood and attitudes toward it is enormous and baffles synthesis.

32. The theme appears in many places in the Bible, for example Mark 12:31, Rom. 13:9, Gal. 5:14, James 2:8.

a father loves his son because he is his son (*filius*, no ambiguity about gender here). Whenever Jacopo writes about nature he becomes a little confused, and confusing. My view is that he very well understood that invoking nature was a modern theological insight worth doing as often as possible, but he is often not comfortable or clear about doing it. Jacopo may have been leery of looking to nature for moral lessons when the Bible was his obvious recourse. Also, the moral lesson from nature may have been that there are no moral lessons from nature that a Christian needed. What precisely might we learn from the wolf? The maternal instinct, loyalty to the group, independence?

Consider, for example, love. What Jacopo means by natural love is what we share with the animals (*bestiis*), that is, animals also love their offspring, at least some of them do. As Augustine makes clear in his homilies, if snakes and wolves (what choices!) can love their children, no man deserves praise for doing so, but he should be despised if he does not love them. So, if you can love your children (the preacher and father Augustine slips into the second person pronoun here and Jacopo is happy to join him) you are like snakes—nothing to boast about. If you do not love your children, the serpents will get you, an image Jacopo also used in his own sermons, implying the torments of hell. Jacopo conceives of what he calls natural love as being greater in the parents for their children than it is in a son with respect to the parents. Jacopo has a biological explanation for this that was part of his century's scientific understanding of reproduction; the parents give more of their bodily substance to the bodies of their offspring (no special credit to the mother here) while the children contributed nothing to the generation of their parents.³³

Therefore parents love children like their own members, their own bodies, and here Jacopo invokes a botanical metaphor. Just as the sap of a tree flows from the roots to the branches and not vice versa (not an accurate understanding of flows in a plant, but that is not the issue here), the father is the root, and the branch the son. So he loves his son more than the son loves him. (Jacopo has used these themes in many sermons.) Jacopo deploys a similar argument to show that a mother loves this son more than the father does because *we* love more what we have more right in or to. The son has more of his substance from his mother (at last a notice of pregnancy), as the Philosopher says; Jacopo rightly credits Aristotle with this opinion, though

33. Albertus Magnus certainly explained all this better. For the standard summary of these matters, see Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), a major theme of the entire book, which also considers, as Jacopo does not, the respective weight of each parent's contribution to the substance of the child.

where he learned it is another matter. This powerful maternal love gives her a greater right to him than the father has. Jacopo does not consider whether this means that the son should love his mother more than his father, or (yet) who deserves the most blame when the son goes astray.

Jacopo is very interested in maternal love and reasons for why it is greater than a father's. His second point is that *we* love more what we labor over more. The mother carries the child and nurses it, not the husband.³⁴ This practical assessing of the meaning of pregnancy shows that Jacopo understood motherhood. Third, *we* love more what we know for sure is ours. The mother is certain that she gave birth to her child; the father believes but cannot be sure that the child is certainly his. An old and durable approach to the problem of proving paternity, this conclusion is a little puzzling because Jacopo stressed male infidelity so much. Yet all these unfaithful husbands must have been having sex with women besides slaves and prostitutes, so it seems. All these reasons for differences between maternal and paternal love carried over to other emotions like grief. Mothers mourned more over their children's adversity; fathers rejoiced more over their prosperity. Jacopo explains why women suffered more; they had a softer spirit, as Aristotle wrote in his book *On Animals*. Among these creatures the females were weaker/softer than the males, except for the bear and leopard. These exceptions do not make Jacopo wonder whether or not human women deserve to be in this select group. Since the mother was naturally cold and moist, a bow to the prevailing humoral system of medicine here, and the male warm and dry, the mother will mourn more than the father (tears?).³⁵

This small concession to the feelings of women was enough for Jacopo, and he now offers the insight that a father has a heart filled with greatness of spirit and hence loves noble and wise things and people. Solomon agreed in the passage from Proverbs mentioned earlier (10:1): a wise son is a joy to his father; a foolish one is his mother's bane. Here too Jacopo has shifted from children to sons, clearly privileged in his world as no one seems to be thinking about the fate of the wise or foolish daughter. But his practical cast of mind suggested that parents should teach *them* good morals (*filios suos*, so sons) so that these grown-up men will take care of their parents in old age. Investing in sons by teaching them to honor their parents, among other

34. CG, 205–7, for this and what follows.

35. Monleone (CG, 206) rightly wonders whether or not Jacopo has this directly from Aristotle or from some intermediate source, and because he was very interested in medical matters, I think it likely he learned his Aristotle from someone like his fellow Dominican Albertus Magnus.

things, besides fulfilling a spiritual obligation, also yielded useful material dividends to the parents, a kind of pension plan. Foresight benefited the parents because as Solomon wrote (Prov. 22:6) children were like soft wax: they took the imprint of a seal—parental guidance—and kept it for the remainder of their lives, a medieval commonplace known and used often by Dante. As the author of *Psalms* Jacopo sometimes calls the Prophet wrote (Ps. 22:15), my heart is like warm wax, we absorb good (and bad) teaching that changes us. Seeking another image, Jacopo has picked up the idea of fresh clay with a good smell, another old symbol for something able to take an imprint. Perhaps Jacopo was thinking about pottery.³⁶ He takes from another Psalm (144:12) the image of young men as plants well nurtured from their youth, or as Jacopo sees it, as stalks that bend to the good (to winds or the light?), another way to be influenced.

Parents should chastise delinquent children, remembering the priest Hely who did not correct his children, who came to bad ends.³⁷ Nevertheless, good and obedient children did exist (Jacopo seems surprised by this) and they were a joy to their father, here citing Solomon (Prov. 29:17). These, if they offend, at once receive light punishment from the father and henceforth obey. Good children need only to be sweetly admonished, as Paul wrote in Ephesians (6:4); they should not be provoked to anger, presumably by excessive or unreasonable beatings. I think Jacopo was a basically good child who knew firsthand the feeling that he was sometimes punished too much. What child does not? Other children were hard, proud, and unruly. Solomon spoke about these when he wrote that sparing the rod (in this case) was a sign that the father hated rather than loved his son (Prov. 13:24). These boys needed a beating. The archbishop had no doubt of this.

Jacopo now turns to the duties children owe their fathers and mothers, and he states that they should be humble before their parents and honor and serve them.³⁸ They should behave this way because of an instinct of nature (*propter nature instinctum*), remarkably placing these duties in the category of what we call innate, biological traits. Even more astonishing is that this reason preceded the direct command by God to honor your father and your mother (Ex. 20:12 and 21:17—also used by Jacopo in sermons). Jacopo

36. Monleone (CG, 207) has found an echo of Horace here, but it must be a very distant one, as Jacopo shows no signs of knowing classical Latin poetry.

37. CG, 208–9, for this and what follows. Neither Monleone nor Bertini Guidetti noted this reference to 1 Sam. 2:22–25, a book Jacopo rarely cited.

38. CG, 209–10.

notes, as have others, that for no other commandment in the Decalogue did God state the fates of those who failed to do this—he puts it in the negative—so it must mean that they will have short lives instead of the long ones promised in scripture. Plainly it pleased God when children honored their parents, and displeasing him had consequences. Second, children should serve their parents because they owed them a debt, a meaningful obligation in commercially minded Genoa. This debt resulted from their very existence, their nurturing, and their education. For these investments (it must be so; a gift is not a cause for a debt) children should revere their parents; in vivid terms, they should feed their parents in old age (the pension idea again) as they were fed in childhood. Ecclesiasticus (3:14) urged the son to take care of his father when he was old—one must hope this debt included the mother as well. In return for their education children owed obedience to their parents; as Paul wrote (Ephesians 6:1) children should obey their parents as they obeyed the Lord. Jacopo knows that this passage also mentioned the commandment and other pieces of biblical advice on child rearing, and it immediately turned to slaves, the subject of Jacopo's next section and presumably already on his mind.

Lastly, and again, children should care for their parents by natural instinct. I think the archbishop recurs to this theme because the problem of caring for the elderly in thirteenth-century Genoa would fall to the church and its hospitals and hospices if families failed to care for their own. (No one in Genoa had as yet conceived of a public duty to take care of the aged.) The church assumed a duty to its own elderly members and was already solely responsible for what poor relief existed in the city. If children shirked their responsibilities to their parents, civil life would suffer, and so Jacopo had good reasons for seeing these matters as properly part of a city chronicle. Besides the biblical injunctions already mentioned, there were no laws requiring children to do anything for their parents, who were after all expected to plan for their old age and use their wealth for this purpose until they died. The people Jacopo has in mind here may not be the elites but ordinary folk who had saved little or nothing for old age in a society that had no idea of retirement anyway. People did become unable to work, and at this point investing in children was supposed to pay off. The celibate and childless were on their own and had to make other arrangements involving the wider family or institutions like religious orders or hospitals. Jacopo, searching for a common motive children would have beyond God's command to take care of their parents, turned to nature, which he claimed taught children that they should take care of needy parents in their old age and when they were dying. This "end of life" obligation is new here and a

sign of Jacopo's originality throughout this section. Death was a vast subject for medieval (and modern) scholars; the mechanics of dying, then and now, receive less scrutiny.

How was Jacopo to prove that nature required this? He turns to the exempla of Valerius Maximus, and this seems to be the one classical source Jacopo knew well. As a compendium arranged by topic and drawing on a vast number of sources, it would appeal to a busy man in search of support. Admittedly Valerius was a pagan, but this fact did not exclude him from Jacopo's arsenal. These are three great stories, just the type Jacopo loved to absorb and repeat.³⁹ First is the tale about the dutiful daughter who visits her father in prison. He was starving, and with no other food to offer him, she gave her father her own milk, the most graphic way to aid a hungry parent one can imagine.⁴⁰ This deed saves the father from starvation, and a judge is moved to spare him. The second story concerns the stork and is an appeal to natural instinct. Jacopo believed that in old age this bird was fed by its children. Vultures (no models for human behavior) let their parents die of hunger. Finally, as a model for taking care of dying parents and properly burying them (another end of life detail) Jacopo cites the story about the Persian king Darius, who honored the graves of the Scythians, the parents of his enemies. He ends this section abruptly on this note, but the message is clear. Burial for the dead was another problem for the church when it concerned the poor or those who had made no provision for their funerals and burials. One of the purposes of a last will and testament was to take care of this for oneself, but some did not make wills and many were too poor to bother.⁴¹ The heirs, ideally the children, had the duty to bury their parents, and these charges, along with other debts, were the first claims on an estate. But if these mechanisms failed, the church had the responsibility to bury the proverbial paupers, and this expense was one Jacopo was sensibly eager to avoid and place on the children as their debt to parents.

39. CG, 211–12; as Monleone notes, the story about the stork is not in fact in Valerius Maximus, and he thinks this may mean Jacopo read an interpolated copy, or in my view he simply misremembered where he read it.

40. This story is central to A. B. Yehoshua's recent novel, *The Retrospective* (New York, 2013); one of his characters claims (91) that in the Middle Ages the motif, Roman charity, almost disappeared, but Jacopo is an exception.

41. I considered this matter for a slightly earlier period in *Wills and Wealth in Medieval Genoa, 1150–1250* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 136–66.

Masters and Slaves

Jacopo thought that after the head of the family had ordered his domestic life with respect to his wife and children, he should turn to the slaves.⁴² As we will see, there is no doubt that Jacopo was thinking of actual slaves here, and not the free domestic servants he would also briefly discuss as an afterthought in this section.⁴³ The average price of a slave in Genoa at this time limited purchasers to the upper ranks of Genoese society. Slaves were just a few percent of Genoa's population, overwhelmingly female and employed in the houses of the rich and powerful. These were exactly the men Jacopo intended to address in this chronicle as having political responsibility for the affairs of the commune. Jacopo may have sensed from the echoes available to him about ancient Greek and Roman society that those political classes were certainly slaveholders and wrote about the institution. He had good theoretical and practical reasons for discussing slavery as part of an overall portrait of Genoese noble and mercantile elite households. Whether or not the church in Genoa owned any slaves at this time is unknown, but there was no rule against it and certain convents owned female slaves as domestic helpers for the noble sisters used to such luxuries. He also knew that the church and canon law in the thirteenth century had come to terms with slavery and in particular followed the papal rules that the conversion of a slave to Christianity did not obligate the master to free the slave.⁴⁴ In other words, as in late Rome, it was perfectly legal, in both civil and canon law, for a Christian to own a coreligionist. There is no sign that Jacopo was uncomfortable with slavery, and given his milieu, it would have been astounding if he criticized slavery on any grounds.

Jacopo's tidy habits of mind found four categories of slaves to analyze: (1) slaves born to a slave woman, (2) slaves taken in war, true *servi*, spared and not killed, (3) slaves rented for an annual fee, and (4) slaves purchased in the market.⁴⁵ All four were realities in late thirteenth-century Genoa, as Jacopo

42. For the context of Jacopo's language of slavery, see my *Speaking of Slavery: Color, Ethnicity, and Human Bondage in Italy* (Ithaca, 2001), 16–61, and 41–43 for a look at Jacopo's words.

43. For a look at sexual relations in households outside of marriage, see Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2012), 80–100, for a look at masters, servants, and slaves.

44. This was first clearly shown by Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), especially 146–51 and 212–15, a vital issue in the crusader states and the Spanish kingdoms, but also important to those in the business of acquiring slaves, like the Genoese.

45. CG, 212–13. Monleone found no source for any of this and neither have I, so this is Jacopo's original and important thought.

knew well. Slaves were born in Genoa, which followed the rule that the status of the child followed the condition of the mother.⁴⁶ Hence it did not matter that Genoese men fathered some of the slaves; they were still slaves, though admittedly a challenge to the harmony of the household and the conscience of the father. The Genoese acquired slaves from people who presumably took them somehow, either in war, raiding, or trade, but these kinds of questions were not apparently asked on the shores of the Black Sea or the other places the Genoese “found” slaves. At this time they were not personally fighting anyone it was permissible to enslave. The Pisans and Venetians, for example, enemies and fellow Christians, were captives to be ransomed, not slaves to be bought and sold until free or dead. That Jacopo knew that people rented slaves they could not afford to own or only needed temporarily shows how keen a social observer he was. The earliest rented slaves in Genoa known to me were women capable of breast-feeding children. Free wet nurses were available for hire, but some obviously preferred a more durable relationship, and the women available for employing were perhaps not as healthy as the slaves whose qualities the owner could guarantee. Buying and selling slaves presumes a market, though in Genoa no regular slave market, auction, or store per se apparently existed at this time. Slaves were for sale in the harbor and in the households of the wealthy. A rich vein of law regulated their sale, drawing rules from the Roman laws on slavery, the most precise and durable ever devised by the human mind.

Jacopo, a theologian rather than any sort of lawyer, turned to the Bible rather than law codes to explain the legitimacy and nature of slavery. In Ephesians (6:5–6) Paul instructed slaves to obey their earthly masters with fear and trembling, “not as servants pleasing to the eye of men” but as slaves of Christ.⁴⁷ Going first to this passage plainly shows that Jacopo understood the differences between slaves and servants.⁴⁸ Slaves came in all types; some were filled with good sense while others were lazy and wicked. The master should love good slaves and put the bad ones to continuous work, presumably the universal antidote to vice. The Bible commanded these responses. Ecclesiasticus (7:23) told the master to love a good slave as himself, while

46. He had explained this in a Sunday sermon, *SD*, 323r.

47. For an astute analysis of slavery in the New Testament, see Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford, 2002), especially 34–38, 46–50, 102–29.

48. Jacopo’s analysis is sharp and original; compare to the brief and vague comments by Hugh of Saint-Cher in his *Postilla on Eph. 6:1–6 on slavery: Postilla Hugonis de Sancto Charo*, ed. N. Pezzana (Venice, 1703), 7:178v, cols a and b.

Solomon said, “A wise slave will rule over a worthless son and will share the inheritance with the brothers” (Prov. 17:2). Extending the Christian duty to love one another to their slaves was not something Jacopo learned from classical literature or law. Since it would be possible that in Genoa the wise slave might actually be the only son of the master, some may have thought he deserved to share equally in the inheritance, though even a freed slave never ranked that high among Genoese heirs.

Ecclesiasticus (33:26–29) provided Jacopo with long and vivid advice about how to treat a lazy slave, whom both writers compared to a donkey. Just as a master used harness and the rod to whip, place burdens upon, and feed the ass, the slave needed discipline, work, and food. A wicked slave deserved punishment in the stocks—no sign of these in Genoa, where whipping and branding sufficed. Though Jacopo quotes this passage possibly from memory and a little out of order, he emphasized that a slave put to work, a busy slave, would look forward to his rest, and presumably be too worn out to cause trouble or rebel. An idle slave would seek freedom. So the slave should be forced to work because idleness was a good teacher of mischief (or worse). Wicked slaves, in the first instance those who would not work, should be punished with chains and whips. There is a kind of disconnection between this biblical slavery and the one actually existing in Genoa at this time. The writer of Ecclesiasticus invokes a world in which slaves (males) seem to be primarily agricultural workers or involved in burdensome toil like donkeys, an animal familiar enough, along with mules, on the streets of Genoa. Perhaps a few slaves worked as porters, but those men in this business I have seen were free muleteers. In fact the slaves working in Genoa were mostly women engaged in domestic service in the households of the wealthy, and their many tasks of cooking and cleaning, carrying loads and water, were certainly not easy. But these slaves were part of the household, even though they sometimes needed to be fettered or worse. The male head of the household commanded his wife and children, but Jacopo said nothing about beating them and probably would have frowned on that or considered it to be the kind of thing a wife had the right to complain about. Some of these slaves provided more intimate service compelled by the lash or threat of violence, but Jacopo is not prepared to investigate this (yet).

Chains reminded Jacopo that the same book went on (42:5) to mention the beating of a disloyal slave as one of a man's many household responsibilities. But it is the archbishop who explains that one should not be ashamed or afraid to beat bloody a very bad slave. At this point, and others, one is bound to wonder if Jacopo ever owned a slave, or how he was able to write

the following remarkable exegesis.⁴⁹ Slaves, however acquired, are inferior to their owners, but they are equal in five respects. First, slaves and free people were created from the earth and are born naked and crying, as in Wisdom (7:3–4). Here Solomon is claiming to be like other men; Jacopo uses the passage to derive from it what we call the monogenesis theory of human origins and fundamental claim of equality among the descendants of Adam and Eve. Jacopo cuts up the passage and revealingly omits the pleasures of marriage as one of the things the king had in common with his people. Marriage between slaves was a vexed issue Jacopo did not want to discuss, since that type of household was not what he had in mind, and sex was not a subject he went out of his way to discuss.

Second, the same passage from Wisdom also supported the idea that all people, slave or free, shared the same world, earth, and air.⁵⁰ Jacopo does not explain what this observation means. Breathing the common air, one of the few things nobody in Genoa commodified, conferred on all the breathers an equality that derived less clearly from standing on the earth, seldom common to all and certainly not to slaves who enjoyed no legal right to personal property. Third, all people, slave or free, died, rotted, and became dust, as Wisdom makes clear. We all enter and leave life the same way, a point Jacopo notes that Cyprian of Carthage made at greater length in his work (*The Book to Demetrianus*). Since slaves and masters have the same destinies, in this instance physical corruption, they shared a kind of equality. Although Jacopo wrote about birth and death in detail, the other common experience of slaves and masters, sex, did not form the basis of any type of equality Jacopo understood or discussed. That slaves and masters could produce children was not going to be in medieval Genoa, or more recent slave-owning societies like our own, an argument for human equality. As we saw in the previous chapter, Jacopo was well aware of the problems resulting from having a wife and a female slave under the same roof.⁵¹ These threesomes were no doubt arguing about sex and children, and not the theoretical basis of human equality.

Fourth, slaves and free people have the same God, and Jacopo paraphrases Paul (Eph. 6:9) advising masters to forget the little things, knowing that both you and they (the slaves) have a master in heaven and with him there is no partiality. (He is no respecter of persons.)⁵² Jacopo also paraphrases Job

49. CG, 213.

50. CG, 214, for this and what follows. How much Jacopo directly knew about the works of Cyprian of Carthage is not clear, but he had used some of his works in *The Golden Legend*.

51. CG, 180–81.

52. CG, 215.

(3:19) to the effect that small and great there (the next world) are the same, and the slave/servant is free from his master. So just as there was no marriage in heaven, there would be no slavery, but how these situations became arguments for some type of equality between husbands and wives, or slaves and masters, is not clear. It is important to note that Jacopo has nothing to say about the religious lives of slaves in a chronicle filled with the spiritual experiences of the Genoese people. Christian slaves, perhaps standing before their archbishop in the cathedral of San Lorenzo, shared a common baptism and all the other sacraments (except holy orders for sure and marriage?) with free people.

That Jacopo on some level knew this is clear from his fifth reason for positing an equality between slave and master: they will experience the same Last Judgment. They may come to the same glory, as Paul explained in Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:10): "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil." Jacopo also cuts up and rephrases the more famous passage from Ephesians (6:8): "knowing that each will be requited from the Lord for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free." Jacopo ends this section by quoting Ephesians, though he did not care to mention the business about masters not bullying their slaves. Jacopo believed that physical death was not the end of the human experience. Beyond this world and its sins, among which Jacopo did not list slavery, there was a better place where slavery did not exist and people would be judged by common standards like faith. Working for a world without sin was a worthy endeavor, but this did not by any means make Jacopo an abolitionist.

Accuracy

It is a commonplace that accuracy is the first duty of a historian, at any time and place. Tracking errors and omissions in a historian is a good but complex strategy for learning more about how he or she thinks. The patterns in these lapses show Jacopo's state of mind in his sixties as he composed this chronicle. Ronald Syme, who inspires this approach, began his chapter on this topic with the strong claim "Cornelius Tacitus does not need to be vindicated for accuracy."⁵³ Any student of Jacopo da Varagine must begin with

53. Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), 378–96. Syme was a strongly partisan student of his historian, and this is a warning not to take the approach of vindicating, or deprecating, one's subject.

the fact that there are a lot of problems in his text. Perhaps like Tacitus in his *Annals*, death supervened and he did not have the chance to revise and correct his work as he would have wished. We are interested in nonintentional errors; that is, not outright lies, which are in fact absent. We will look first at the errors, and thinking about them as Jacopo might have, we should separate these into five categories. Three types of errors derive from how Jacopo used sources to that part of Genoa's history occurring before he was an eyewitness to it. Mistakes result from reading his sources (which we mostly have) or simply reading them poorly. Second, Jacopo did not catch some errors at the stage we might call revising or copyediting; some may be simply writing slips. It would be a great benefit to know if he dictated this text or wrote down his first draft in his own hand.⁵⁴ Third, Jacopo's sources were in error, and he was therefore misled. Two categories refer to the problems in the sections of his chronicle covering that part of the thirteenth century (1240s–1295) for which he was a living witness to some events, though he had fine sources in the city chronicles down to the 1280s and his worthy predecessor Jacopo Doria. To the extent that Jacopo relied on his memory, sometimes he may have misremembered. This will be vital to understanding how he wrote about his own time, but as we will see, some of his lapses in memory are incredible and appalling in a historian. Finally, sometimes Jacopo may have erred as an observer, and this problem verges into how he characterized his own career as archbishop of Genoa. By then he was at the center of events, and when he misunderstands what he sees, the history suffers. How Jacopo edited the present is the final part of our analysis of Jacopo as a historian.

Monleone checked his edition for addenda and corrigenda, and he was scrupulous about noting some types of errors in the text.⁵⁵ Good old manuscripts of the chronicle survive, and a few seem to be close copies of the lost original, what I presume to be Jacopo's own working copy, left incomplete at the time of his death. Hence I do not believe copyist errors are an issue here, and Monleone was careful to note variants in the manuscripts he collated. The pattern of the variants was to note in later copies that the original text was in error but not to change it. For all these reasons I am confident that we can isolate a body of errors committed by the author himself.

54. I find it hard to decide whether Jacopo dictated this text or wrote it down in his own hand; I lean toward the latter.

55. None of the errors I consider fall into the category of editorial slips caught by Monleone. What he may have missed is another matter, but all his readers testify to his hard work and diligence in making an excellent edition.

Dates

I do not think any historian need justify beginning with accuracy in dates because problems here are usually signs of other types of errors, and readers expect that an accurate historian at least provides a reliable chronology. When the dates are incorrect, the historian may also be confused about causality, since a faulty chain of events results in either a misleading sense of causes or a sensible conclusion not supported by the evidence. Jacopo's predecessors, especially Jacopo Doria, were scrupulous in dating and were in this limited sense a better model than the Bible. Giving Jacopo every benefit of the doubt, we should not hold him to task for remote petty details like his dating of the beginning of Nero's reign to 57 rather than 54, or to his hazy chronology of the early bishops of Genoa, about which modern historians sharply disagree, with better sources than he had.⁵⁶ Let us also remember that the large central part of this chronicle, where Jacopo offered advice to rulers, citizens, and heads of households, had no place for the kinds of direct factual errors at issue here. The preacher or political thinker knew his Bible and his opinions well enough to be accurate about them. What is at issue here is Jacopo as historian. Rather than building up to a whopper, let us begin with one and then contextualize the issue in lesser matters.

The Battle of Meloria, on Sunday, August 6, 1284, was one of the greatest naval triumphs in Genoese history and resulted in a defeat so crushing to Pisa that the city began the process of fading away as a rival to Genoa (or anyone else) in the Mediterranean.⁵⁷ Jacopo Doria provided a long and detailed account in his annals under the year 1284, and not just because his brother Oberto was one of the admirals of the Genoese fleet.⁵⁸ Jacopo was probably about sixty at the time of this victory. So it astonishes that writing only a decade later, he records the battle as taking place under the archepiscopacy of his immediate predecessor in the year 1288.⁵⁹ Even worse, in an earlier section when Jacopo was narrating Genoa's rise to perfection he

56. CG, 73, for Nero, also off on Constantine by three years, so possibly a simple math mistake here?

57. Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 159, and even more emphatically Dino Puncuh, ed., *Storia di Genova: Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico* (Genoa, 2003), 206–8.

58. Jacopo Doria, *Annales*, in *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 5, 1280–1293, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Rome, 1929), 52–55.

59. CG, 396, in the last triad of sections breaking down the history of Genoa by bishop and archbishop, which we are considering here mainly from the point of view of the errors. Monleone notes variants in later copies calling this date an error (even if a scribal one), but as it appears in the best manuscript, we must attribute it to Jacopo, for reasons the next note makes even clearer.

stated that the battle occurred in 1283.⁶⁰ How is this not like a historian at about sixty years of age, writing in the 1950s, dating the Normandy invasion of June 6, 1944, as in 1948 or 1943? Such a mistake is inexcusable and inexplicable, unless Jacopo was racing against illness or death to get this chronicle down and he simply failed to revise or catch a simple error. In my view this is another argument against dictation, as what Genoese stenographer would fail to tell his author about it? What we have here is an error of memory, misreading of a source (Doria), or both.⁶¹

Now what might this error mean? Jacopo might have saved himself this kind of problem if he had provided fewer dates than he does or stuck more rigidly to the annalistic format of his predecessors. Instead, Jacopo seems proud of his skills in chronology and provides many dates, though very rarely to the month or day, as his sources frequently did. Is it fair to take this error as a proxy for his general accuracy and therefore subject the entire text to the closest possible scrutiny from every angle? In a word—yes. But the nature of our method precludes on sensible grounds a list of every correct date, which would be longer than the mistakes. But to repeat, in addition to having a good source, Jacopo should have remembered this key moment of Genoese history, especially when claiming to be a historian.

Monleone's edition proves a general carelessness about dates in Jacopo's chronicle. Take, for an example, Jacopo's dating of the capture of Beirut, with Genoese help in the crusader East, to the year 1102.⁶² This event really occurred in 1110, as the contemporary excellent annalist Caffaro makes clear. In fact placing this conquest too early makes a big muddle of Genoa's actual role in the First Crusade, about which the city and its previous historians were justly if unfortunately proud. Placing the capture of Antioch in 1099, the same year as the fall of Jerusalem, instead of 1098, is at least an error of reading since Caffaro had the right year.⁶³ It could be argued that by the 1290s and the loss of all the crusader possessions on the Asian mainland, this might not have really mattered. Acre, Antioch, Beirut were all lost, as it

60. CG, 95. In the same section are errors we put into the minor category, like dating the siege of Ceuta to 1232 instead of 1235, and the siege of Damietta to 1220 instead of 1219, here called a Genoese war with French assistance. CG, 94.

61. By contrast, the Franciscan Salimbene de Adam da Parma (1221–88/89), a friend to Pisa, precisely dates the battle to Sunday, August 13, 1284, one week off; see his *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia and Berardo Rossi (Parma, 2007), 1484, a detailed account of the battle. The news may have taken a week to reach him.

62. CG, 306.

63. CG, 89; Monleone generously blames this error most likely on the copyist. All the manuscripts have 1099.

turned out for good, and Genoese horizons in the eastern Mediterranean no longer included them. Balanced against this must be the continued activity of Genoese merchants and privateers like Benedetto Zaccaria, a keen interest in Cyprus, and above all the fact that it was very important to Archbishop Jacopo that by repeated papal bulls the archbishop of Genoa had permanent legatine status in the East.⁶⁴ This role, among other things, gave Jacopo a standing brief to take an interest in everything from the Black Sea to Alexandria. By the 1280s, at the latest, to judge from their wills, the Genoese doubted that there would ever be another crusade.⁶⁵ If he can be so repeatedly hazy about the details of crusader history, we should be alert, but also wonder if the sloppiness is also the result of a blind spot in a historian failing to note the loss of Acre in 1291—more on this when we look at omissions.

Jacopo claims that the Genoese made Godfrey the first king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, a gross exaggeration at best that would have stunned the nobles actually participating in the election.⁶⁶ Since no source makes this claim, it seems that Jacopo erred in observation, perhaps because he was inclined to overestimate the role of Genoa in most things (for the good as he saw it). In the early twelfth century a story began to arrive in the West about an annual miracle, occurring in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, concerning the mysterious appearance of heavenly light at Easter. Caffaro, who was in the East, notes this, but it is Jacopo who mistakenly observes that Caffaro had actually seen these miraculous lights himself.⁶⁷ Since Caffaro had not misled him here, misreading does not seem to be the problem. Yet another error in observation was possibly prompted by making the evidence for this miracle rest on an eyewitness rather than a simple report. Jacopo knew very well the problems of reported miracles, since he has shown himself to be a careful sifter of miracle stories. Finally, Genoa was one of the anticipated ports of departure for what modern historians call the Children's Crusade of 1212.⁶⁸ Jacopo, who drew on the contemporary annals for the Genoese connection, placed the crusade in 1222, which pushes it in a very different,

64. CG, 348, for his own notice of the wide legatine powers *Oltremare*.

65. See, for example, a legacy to a *passagium*, what the Genoese called a crusade, if there is one, ASG, CN, Cart. N. 93, 180r, April 16, 1282, but such legacies and doubts continued on into the early fourteenth century; note a legacy in 1313 "to aid the Holy Land overseas when a *passagium* will be summoned": Cart. N. 8, 197r–v.

66. CG, 85.

67. CG, 85.

68. See Gary Dickson, *Children's Crusade: Medieval History, Modern Mythhistory* (Basingstoke, 2008) for a fine study that notes Genoa's place in the wider events.

incomprehensible context.⁶⁹ A simple misreading is the likely cause here, or perhaps a scribal error. Jacopo deserves credit for extracting this event from the great mass of details the annalists provided about these busy decades in Genoese history. Nothing like this had happened again. The Genoese (unlike some other places) did not profit from the young people, or take them to the wrong place, or sell some into slavery, but instead sent them on their way and took care of those deciding to stay in the city.⁷⁰ In the 1290s, with perfect hindsight, Jacopo recognized this crusade as a step in the unraveling of the crusading movement over the course of the thirteenth century.

A second class of errors concerned what we would call church history, to Jacopo principally the story of the papacy in Rome. Jacopo understood the significance of the papacy of Gregory VII (1073–85) and his disputes with Emperor Henry IV. Jacopo had no idea when this pope actually died, and he places it at the beginning of the episcopacy of Ciriacus, which began in 1090.⁷¹ The error confuses the circumstances of a reforming papacy in these years, since Jacopo has Gregory immediately succeeded by Urban II, skipping over the papacy of Victor III (1086–7). Jacopo has turned his attention to what he regarded as the most important act of Urban's papacy, the summoning of the First Crusade, and his letter asking for Genoese assistance for this endeavor. Since he misunderstood the troubled early years of Urban's pontificate, this crusade literally comes out of the blue, and Jacopo is in no position to understand anything about what prompted the First Crusade, including the Byzantine Empire, about which Jacopo seems to have known almost nothing. Let us call this one another error of observation, or judgment. The important papacy of Alexander III witnessed schism and a major church council. Genoa consistently supported his cause against Emperor Frederick I. Jacopo claims he was elected in 1162, when he actually became pope in 1159.⁷² Again, we could conclude that a hasty and sloppy reading of the annals caused this error, and surely more recent struggles between papacy and empire obscured this one.

As we have seen about Meloria, the patterns of Jacopo's mistakes included the history of Genoa in his own time. Deeper in the past, the pattern of wars

69. CG, 373, after the crusade to Damietta, nearly contemporary to the crusade of Frederick II, and wrenched out of what was happening in France in 1212.

70. The eyewitness annalist Ogerio Pane in *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 2, 1174–1224, ed. L. T. Belgrano and C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Genoa, 1901), 123; see Dickson, *Children's Crusade*, for the misdeeds of others.

71. CG, 300.

72. CG, 92.

between Genoa and Pisa in the twelfth century required a truce in order to make the Third Crusade possible in the aftermath of the disastrous defeat in the East at Hattin in 1187. This was especially important because the kings of France and England proposed to sail to the Holy Land, and this would require peaceful seas and most of the shipping in the western Mediterranean. Genoa and Pisa duly reached this peace in 1187, which the contemporary annalist Ottobono Scriba placed in the immediate context of the crusader East, and was instigated by the excommunicated emperor Henry VI.⁷³ Jacopo records this peace as occurring in 1177, wrenched from its appropriate context and another typical error where a wrong date left Jacopo with no real explanation for why peace broke out in 1177, which in fact it did not.⁷⁴

Closer to his own time and his own position, Jacopo was definitely interested in the question of exactly which bishops were subordinates of the archbishop of Genoa. Part of the prestige and power of an archbishop depended on the number and significance of these suffragan bishops. As we have seen, Genoa became an archbishopric in special circumstances, and the distant and rather insignificant bishops of Corsica justified this rank. On the mainland of Italy Genoa found itself hemmed in by the archdioceses of Milan, which extended to nearby Pavia, and Pisa. Genoa's archbishop had to find his bishops in the smaller towns of Liguria, and there were not many to be had. Jacopo accurately states that in 1133 Genoa got the three bishops of Corsica and the bishops of Bobbio and Brugnato on the mainland, with Albenga following from Pope Alexander III and Noli from Pope Innocent IV (1243–54).⁷⁵ In the section on how Genoa became an archbishopric Jacopo was careful to set out the list of suffragan bishops, and here too he credited Innocent IV with this act.⁷⁶ As Monleone knew, from the registers of the archbishops and the careful preservation of papal bulls in Genoa, Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) in 1239 had made Noli subject to Genoa.⁷⁷ Jacopo should

73. *Annales Ianuenses*, 2:23, of special interest in Genoa because of the role Conrad of Montferrat (a noble family from nearby Piedmont) played in saving the city of Tyre.

74. CG, 355; so he made Frederick I the peacemaker in the wrong context, not when he considered the loss of the True Cross, a metonymy for it all, in 1187 (356).

75. CG, 332, this in the appropriate setting of Genoa's first archbishop.

76. CG, 222–23, and here he includes some learned information about the extent of the province of Genoa, the Cottian Alps, deriving from Paul the Deacon.

77. The anonymous compiler of the city's annals from 1225 to 1250 did not mention this in his account of the year 1239: *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 3, 1225–1250, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Rome, 1923), 91–97, mostly taken up with turmoil in Genoa. The annalist, propapal, noted under 1240 that Gregory IX gave remission of sins to all those fighting rebels against the church, the same as those who went on crusade *Oltremare* (98).

have known this because he was the custodian of the relevant archive and he had frequently consulted this source, often naming the register. Innocent IV had showered his native Genoa with papal grants of all types.⁷⁸ Perhaps Jacopo simply misremembered and thought it likely that if something good had come to Genoa from the hands of the papacy, it had come from Innocent IV. A mistake of a few years and the wrong pope may not have seemed like much. But the emerging pattern suggests that Jacopo's carelessness about dates extended to every part of his chronicle.

Finally, there are what we might term errors of scholarship, resulting from misreading sources though the lens of bias or simply a lapse in memory. A simple example occurs when Jacopo mistakenly attributes to Isidore of Seville details from a book actually written by Bede.⁷⁹ Jacopo knew both these authors well, and both had written on matters of chronology (the issue here), so this is an example of a simple slip. It is not the kind of error a scholar likes to make, but it happens. More important is when the historian willfully misreads his source. As we will consider in more detail below, and have already mentioned in the context of the *Legenda Aurea* and its life of St. Pelagius, Jacopo understood the significance of the rise of Islam as an agent of historical change profoundly influencing the world in which Genoa existed down to his own day. Jacopo had revealed a good understanding of the basic features of Islam. Hence it is a surprise to read in his etymology of *Ianua*, where discussing idolatry among the Romans, that it was like the way the Saracens *will* worship Venus.⁸⁰ Jacopo was in between two sources here, Ugucione da Pisa and the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor, texts he frequently cited, but not for the detail about Venus. On some level Jacopo knew that Muslims had a horror of graven images and were certainly not worshipping Venus (or for that matter Mohammad). When the sources were not before his eyes, when he was not concentrating on a subject, Jacopo was most likely to reveal his prejudices. Slips in memory or reading are not the issue here, so let us call it at best an error in judgment.

Before explaining the patterns in Jacopo's errors, let us look at an even more complex aspect of his historical work—what he omits.

78. For a sampling of these, see *Lettere di Innocenzio IV dai cartolari notari genovesi*, ed. Franco Guerello, *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae* 23 (Rome, 1961).

79. *CG*, 28.

80. *CG*, 47–48. Since he noticed the worship of Venus in *LA*, 1263, decades prior, it is surprising he repeated the canard. Jacopo may have learned this from Bede, who fostered the eliding of Lucifer, the Morning Star, and Venus; see John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York, 2002), 73.

Omissions

No historian can include everything, so every historical work is the product of how a historian selects some matters to include, and what he leaves out. Many subsequent writers have turned their attention to the history of medieval Genoa, and naturally many of their works are much longer because they have more sources to consider. Even what Jacopo had at his disposal—an excellent official chronicle reaching back to the late eleventh century, the registers of the bishops and archbishops, the official documents of the commune, his own memories of recent events—was far more than what he could reasonably include in his chronicle. So Jacopo had to choose, abbreviate, and condense, and the patterns in these choices reveal how his mind worked when conceiving the overall context of Genoa's past. Remembering his basic purpose to chart Genoa's rise and to advise its rulers and citizens how to behave, we should expect that much of what he omits was simply irrelevant to his purpose and arguments. We cannot be absolutely sure about this because he never tells us that he is skipping something because it is irrelevant. That habit of historical writing was foreign to his way of working. Instead, we must make reasonable inferences based on information we can be sure he knew. This method runs the risk of imposing on Jacopo modern judgments about the proper scope and content of a history, and faulting him for not following what his successors decided was important. That ahistorical approach is pointless. The best approach is to consider a few subjects where there can be no doubt that Jacopo has omitted something for a reason he must have considered essential to his purpose in writing in the first place.

A typology of omissions benefits from perfect hindsight, so we must always remember that Jacopo was a busy archbishop with many demands on his time besides compiling the most exhaustive history of Genoa possible to write. So, we must admit that he omits some things we think are vital to understanding history. To take one example, taxes and the public debt are subjects of real importance to economic and political historians and ones for which the Genoese sources are abundant. Jacopo has virtually nothing to say about these matters, and this is surprising because his predecessors from Caffaro to Jacopo Doria were informative about the commune's finances. The Genoese notarial records, among the best preserved in Europe, were completely uninteresting to him, including the cartulary of Giovanni Scriba from the 1150s, already an antique by his time but a source he never consulted, even though it showed a nascent commune in action. Better to evaluate the omissions by the standard of what *he* valued. When he skips over something here, we have a genuine clue to his thinking. It is not reasonable

to blame Jacopo for leaving out of his chronicle subjects about which he knew nothing. For example, the important findings of modern archeologists, especially about Roman Genoa, have changed our understanding about classical Genoa in ways he cannot possibly have known. The same is true about sources in Greek, a language he could not read, that mention Genoa.

With these limits in mind, we should focus on the two important categories of omissions: those not fitting his purpose and what embarrasses Genoa as Jacopo conceives of it. It should be no surprise that Jacopo will omit matters not supporting his triumphalist sense that Genoa's history is the story of achieving perfection. He will not even tolerate detours on that path; he does not believe that Genoa's mistakes are worth studying to avoid them in the future. In this sense, his history is selective and self-serving, and we must be on the lookout for signs of this.

Some of these matters we have already noticed and need only mention briefly. One could hardly believe that the well-informed writer of the life of St. Pelagius was capable of the strange and very brief notice of the Prophet Mohammed in the chronicle.⁸¹ In the context of Clovis's conversion (so off by a century) Jacopo baldly writes that Mohammad was suffering from epilepsy and said the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and instructed him on some laws that he gave to his people. He blamed these attacks on the angel's splendor, something he could not endure. And that is it on the rise and nature of Islam, topics we know Jacopo understood better than this. Even where his good understanding of Islam was poor and biased, this is worse. There was a story rattling around the Mediterranean that the Genoese descended from some disgruntled Arab tribe that had migrated west. Genoa's many enemies liked this account. Maybe Jacopo had heard this, but for whatever reason he was not going to make Islam a part of a chronicle intended to advise rulers and citizens how to behave. Especially in the 1290s, this was an omission with bad consequences for Genoa.

A complex and ultimately disastrous war for Genoa broke out in Acre in 1257 and is usually known as the War of St. Sabas, since part of the reason for the war was a contest to possess this church in Acre.⁸² Genoa's few allies, the Hospitalers, Catalonia, and Ancona, faced a formidable alliance of Pisa, Venice, the Templars and Teutonic Knights, the Provençals, and most of the lords of the Latin East, except the lord of Tyre. The official chronicle noted the crushing defeat of a large Genoese fleet in the harbor of Acre on June 23,

81. CG, 236.

82. For the context, see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 146–48.

1258, perhaps two thousand men lost at sea, leading to the surrender of the Genoese in Acre.⁸³ This defeat was a severe blow to Genoese trade and influence in the region, though both would recover. Jacopo briefly mentions the defeat, which he blames on an inadequately armed fleet rather than the opponents, here limited to Pisa and Venice.⁸⁴ Even though Jacopo has to be briefer on this, given the wide scope of his chronicle, it is still clear that he wants to minimize this catastrophe. We do not have to look far for the reason, Guglielmo Boccanegra, but even this is an ambivalent omission for Jacopo.

As we have seen, the *popolo* in Genoa rose against the regime in 1257, in the context of a draining war with Pisa over Sardinia and other problems. The city chronicle was ultimately hostile to Boccanegra's regime, which lasted to a counterrevolution in 1262 when everyone hated this tyrant and overthrew him.⁸⁵ Jacopo simply recorded that Boccanegra was elected captain of the people in 1257 and held the position for five years, nothing more than that.⁸⁶ He had also omitted this popular regime from the lists of forms of government in Genoa.⁸⁷ In brief Boccanegra's policies and accomplishments are grudgingly noticed in the official chronicle and have left many traces in the surviving documents of state in the communal archives. His most important act was to reorganize the city's massive public debt and alienated revenues into a funded public debt with shares yielding 8 percent in perpetuity.⁸⁸ The idea of public credit, in shares that soon enough could be bought and sold in the market, was one of the decisive innovations across communal Italy in the thirteenth century, and a fiscal reform of great importance as it generated the vast sums necessary for the peninsula's increasingly incessant and expensive wars. For Jacopo the rising of the people was anathema, and fiscal policies a bore. He identified with the noble captains of the people like Oberto Spinola and Oberto Doria, the noble papal Fieschi family, basically the people who ran Genoa by the 1290s. This was the story line of the chronicle, and inconvenient truths along the way were edited out. Many people in Genoa in the 1290s, including Jacopo, were old enough to

83. *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 4, 1251–1279, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Rome, 1926), 32–35, for a lengthy and realistic account by the anonymous compilers.

84. CG, 388.

85. CG, 45–46, for the end, and 25 for the beginning.

86. CG, 387.

87. CG, not on 114, where it should have appeared.

88. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, for a brief account of the regime's policies, which are in the context of the initial rising of the *popolo*.

remember Guglielmo Boccanegra; a descendant of his, Simone, would in fact be elected the first doge of Genoa in the next century, so durable was the family's reputation in the minds of the people. In a way, Jacopo tried to consign Guglielmo Boccanegra to oblivion. He did not succeed.

Another omission is even more telling and requires a brief background. Jacopo knew and briefly noted the story of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, which resulted in the Latin conquest of Constantinople and the establishment there of a small Latin Empire basically confined to the shores of the Aegean not in Muslim hands.⁸⁹ Gradually this empire decayed and the Byzantine emperor Michael Palaeologus took Constantinople back for the Greeks on July 25, 1261; hence the event occurred in the penumbra of the Boccanegra captaincy and was thus not mentioned by Jacopo.⁹⁰ What is even more important, however, was the famous document known as the Treaty of Nymphaeum, negotiated and agreed to by the Byzantines and Genoese ambassadors, that committed Genoa to fight with the Greeks against the Franks in Constantinople and their Venetian allies.⁹¹ In brief the Byzantines took Constantinople without Genoese help, but the city ratified the treaty and became a loyal ally to Greek interests in the East. For this, the new pope Urban IV excommunicated the Genoese and placed the city under interdict because the city's treaty with the Greeks worked to the prejudice of Christianity and the Roman church (not to mention the Venetians and the dispossessed French).⁹² Genoa's quarrel with Urban IV lasted until the late 1260s, past the end of Boccanegra's regime and the rising of the Doria and Spinola in 1265. A unifying feature of fractious Genoese politics in this decade was enduring papal displeasure and staying close to the Greek alliance, for reasons resting on local pride, hatred of Venice, and their profitable access to the Black Sea trade, now denied to Venice.

89. *CG*, 365–66, oddly important to Jacopo because of the cross that came Genoa's way, but one senses that Jacopo was glad that Genoa stood well clear of this sordid story.

90. For the story of Genoa's role in these events and their aftermath, see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 150–54. *CG*, 389–90, covers 1261 and goes into vast detail about the rise of the flagellants across Italy in that year, a topic Jacopo the Dominican was bound to notice, especially because the city chronicle had a lot of details on it, though proud that Genoa had stood aloof from this fanaticism.

91. I look in detail at this treaty in my *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000–1400* (Baltimore, 2007), 100–108.

92. *Annales Ianuenses*, 4:44, a subject the official chronicle would not overlook because Genoa decided to stay loyal to the Byzantines and suffered the consequences for years. There is no sign the local church honored the papal commands, patriots that they were, so the local clergy was in real trouble. Jacopo, as an official in the Dominican order by this time, must have remembered this event very well.

Jacopo found one remarkable event in this period to discuss: the arrival of the flagellants in Genoa in 1261. His important account lacks many of the vivid details appearing in the Genoese annals, where leaders are named and their cries are recorded.⁹³ Wherever Jacopo was when he saw the flagellants (and it was winter because he was struck by their virtual nudity in the cold), he was careful to emphasize the clergy involved, carrying crosses and banners before the penitents.⁹⁴ Jacopo claims that at first the Genoese laughed at the flagellants and thought they were idiots; the contemporary chronicler wrote that some said they were a wonderful sign while others said they would not whip themselves and that for the first three days few or no Genoese joined them. This writer also observed that when the flagellants stripped themselves to their underwear they entrusted their clothing to the Franciscans; Jacopo omits them from his account. Both authors agreed that, as by a miracle, general enthusiasm and whipping soon seized the Genoese, as Jacopo noted those who had laughed were then the first to join. Stefania Bertini Guidetti rightly observed that this is one of the most vivid, realistic, heartfelt, and splendid passages in Jacopo's work.⁹⁵ He reshaped the narrative based on his own observations and stressed that the flagellants included great and small people, nobles and commoners, across Italy, a unifying phenomenon.

The reader should have a sense of the dramatic problem in the internal and external history of Genoa in the 1260s. Jacopo could not possibly be ignorant of the events of the Boccanegra regime, and they dominated official history in Genoa throughout this decade, even after the new captains replaced the team of compilers of the annals in 1265. Memories of these dramatic events remained vivid in Genoa as its colony in Crimea, Caffa, became increasingly important to the city's prosperity and became known as a little Genoa. For all these reasons it is amazing that Jacopo mentions nothing at all about the treaty, the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople, or the papal interdict and excommunications. Where these events would have appeared in his account of the archiepiscopacy of Gualterio de Vezano, from 1254 to 1275, Jacopo goes from the flagellants of 1261 to a great comet in 1264, which he saw himself and expected that it presaged some big event or change in history.⁹⁶ Jacopo also noted a sermon he heard preached by Pope

93. *Annales Ianuenses*, 4:39–41, unknown eyewitness annalist certainly read by Jacopo, but he was not there, and as we will see, he prefers to rely elsewhere on what he heard and saw.

94. CG, 389–90, for this and what follows.

95. Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 320.

96. CG, 389–91.

Clement IV at Viterbo and a meeting he attended of the Dominicans in Lombardy. These rare personal references suggest that he remained in the good graces of the papacy and away from Genoa in these years, no matter what the Genoese were going through. He erroneously claims that Charles of Anjou came into Italy this year (actually 1268), but we can see where he is heading, as Genoa came out of the doghouse by supporting the papal-sponsored Angevin cause in Italy in the late 1260s. His version of the 1260s excised an important series of events. The reasons why are probably not far to seek. Genoa was supposed to be a Guelf town so this episode of bitter troubles with the papacy was not one Jacopo cared to record, even though it was of course a big topic in the official contemporary annals. The Genoese were no longer friends to the Byzantines by the 1290s when buccaneers like Benedetto Zaccaria (and others) were picking off pieces of their empire in the Aegean and the Genoese treated their colonies at Pera (across the Bosphorus from Constantinople) and Caffa as sovereign territories and not tolerated enclaves in a foreign state.

Finally, let us look at Jacopo as he examined his own time and decided what to edit out of the history of Genoa in his recent experience of it, in the late 1280s to the early 1290s. First a few words on the context. Jacopo became archbishop of Genoa in 1292, an event his predecessor as city historian Jacopo Doria did not mention. At one time the city chronicles paid a lot of attention to the activities of its spiritual leaders, but those days were over. Doria does not record the death of the previous archbishop, nor does he describe the few years of vacancy when Opizo Fieschi, patriarch of Antioch, had seized the archdiocese.⁹⁷ By the end of his chronicle Doria was tightly focused on war, finances, and the external diplomacy of the commune, not subjects especially engaging to Jacopo da Varagine. Doria was a great historian close to the sources of power in the commune, and he understood the sources of wealth that sustained Genoa's navies. The archbishop was writing mainly from 1292 to 1295, is very brief on 1296 and 1297, and died on July 14, 1298. He does not seem to have thought deeply about politics or considered mercantile capitalism as worth notice beyond its opportunities for avarice. Only for the year 1292 did their work overlap. So our concern is a mere five years of Genoese history.

It is important to observe that Jacopo began this final section of his chronicle by listing his own works in chronological order, an idea he may

97. CG, 400–2: “cepit regere,” nicely vague on the source of his authority.

have picked up from one of his favorite writers, Augustine, who also wanted to make sure posterity knew the scope of his endeavors.⁹⁸ Doria's long, detailed, and perceptive analysis of Genoese political history, and the details he provides about taxes, was not the model Jacopo followed. Instead, he leached out much important material on Genoa's war with Venice and, perhaps not surprisingly, narrowed his focus to the history of the church, mainly in Rome but also in Genoa. Jacopo was not a cardinal, and his interest in the popes of these years, Celestine V and Boniface VIII, is strong and a little wistful. (In my view Jacopo would have made an excellent pope, and maybe he thought so as well.) Jacopo spent more space on the brief and unhappy pontificate of Celestine V than on any other subject for these years. "In our times" (1294) a humble hermit named Pietro was elected pope and made some cardinals without advice (overlooking the archbishop of Genoa, as we know).⁹⁹ Jacopo implies this man was too simple to be pope, states that he was not up to the job, and notes his astonishing resignation.

It was a unique experience, not to be repeated, for Genoa to have its archbishop as local historian. Jacopo restored to the civic annals the activities of the local church, so he noted an important synod he held in his archdiocese in 1293 and the leading part he played on January 1, 1295, in mediating a truce between the Mascarati (Ghibelline) and Rampini (Guelf) factions in the city.¹⁰⁰ In the same year Jacopo played a political role as part of an embassy including two lawyers and two nobles Genoa sent at Pope Boniface's request to negotiate a peace with Venice in the aftermath of Genoa's great victory at sea at Laiazzo the previous year.¹⁰¹ This effort led to a general peace, and Jacopo witnessed the ensuing celebrations in Genoa. As the preacher he was, Jacopo concludes the notice of the war's end with a slightly edited passage from Proverbs (25:14): "Like clouds and wind when no rain follows is the man who boastfully promises what he never fulfills."¹⁰² Since he lived long enough to know about and record naval skirmishing between the rivals in 1296 and 1297, this comment may have been less prophetic

98. CG, 405, a list to which we will return.

99. CG, 408–10.

100. CG, 405 for the synod, and 411–12 for the truce, which Jacopo was unhappy to note did not last the year, which he attributed to how good and evil events were mixed together in this world. A preacher as historian.

101. CG, 102–9, for the delegation and its sequel; Jacopo uses "we" to describe its activities.

102. CG, 109: "Nubes, ventus et pluvie non sequentes, vir gloriosus et promissa non implens." Monleone notes the original Latin in the Bible is *promissa non complens* (gives). Bertini Guidetti (Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 146) thinks that this is an ironic and humorous quotation (rare in my view).

than it seems. But only a naive person would have predicted permanent friendship between Venice and Genoa. Humbert of Romans had warned Dominicans about the dangers of engaging in secular matters, in this case even humble matters such as wills and the like.¹⁰³ Humbert knew that advice on temporal affairs was sometimes necessary, and he cites John the Baptist to Herod Antipas and Joseph to pharaoh, but there are dangers and Jacopo must have doubted he ranked with these holy men.

Apart from these events, Jacopo omitted nearly everything else about Genoese history in these years. It is a tricky matter to dwell on what a historian leaves out, though these gaps tell us about what was on his mind. As well, we have no other history for these years, and only the musings of the Anonymous Poet of Genoa (good on the anarchy of 1296) and the official records of the commune to suggest what other matters Jacopo may have noted but did not. It is not a big surprise that Jacopo failed to notice the fall of Acre in 1291 and the consequences of the loss of the last Christian stronghold on the mainland of what was the crusader East. Doria had many details on this event and knew its importance.¹⁰⁴ Jacopo found no place for these matters; they hardly fit his notion of Genoa triumphant and perfect in the 1290s.¹⁰⁵ That he failed to mention the deaths of Jacopo Doria in 1294 and his own predecessor Archbishop Bernardo de Arimondi in 1287 may be small matters; Jacopo took the eagle's approach to history and as a rule had no obituaries in his chronicle. Subsequent historians of Genoa have been very interested in the precocious and intrepid voyage of the Vivaldi brothers, who sailed west out of the Mediterranean in 1291, planning to circumnavigate Africa and establish a sea route to the riches of India. They disappeared and were never heard from again, no doubt a story still knocking around Liguria when Columbus was growing up there.¹⁰⁶ It is a pity the historian on the spot had nothing to say about this venture, but its motives (and failure) would not have appealed to him. The heroic naval activities of Benedetto and Manuele Zaccaria receive a brief notice, but that was in the context of

103. From Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicatorum*, in *Beati Humberti de Romanis Opera de Vita Regulari*, vol. 2, ed. Joachim Joseph Berthier (Rome, 1888–89; repr. Turin, 1956), 453, and for what follows 475–76.

104. *Annales Ianuenses*, 5:130, noting the slaughter and that two Genoese galleys saved as many as they could.

105. Norman Housley notes a widespread lack of interest in Europe about the loss of Acre; see his *The Later Crusades: From Lyons to Alcazar 1274–1580* (Oxford, 1992), 22, so perhaps Jacopo is typical here, but still a puzzling perspective for a Genoese.

106. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 181–82.

the renewed troubles with Venice in 1296 and not the overall problems arising in the eastern Mediterranean as a result of Mamluk victories.¹⁰⁷ Jacopo had no real sense of Genoa's place in the world or its maritime successes like establishing regular galley service to Flanders in the 1290s. One would never know from his history that trade was the city's life blood. For Jacopo, preaching against avarice was as close as he came to addressing these issues.

The collection of state papers known as the *Liber Iurium*, another precious source for Genoese history surviving to the present day, contains other clues to what Jacopo did not write about for the 1290s. An enduring blind spot was diplomacy, even when it came to something interesting to Jacopo, like King Leo of Armenia's generous grant to the Genoese in 1288 concerning their slave-trading activities in his kingdom.¹⁰⁸ Nor did he mention the important (then and to modern historians) treaty Alberto Spinola negotiated with the sultan of Egypt in 1290.¹⁰⁹ The treaty was an astute repositioning of Genoese interests in the East (and the prospects for Acre), not within Jacopo's historical gaze. Nor does he mention a papal bull from Pope Nicholas IV in 1292 promising Genoa that its people cannot be excommunicated.¹¹⁰ As we have seen, this is not a subject Jacopo wanted to discuss or probably even remember. He also knew well that Pope Innocent IV had issued the same bull, and it had not stopped Pope Urban IV. In 1294 the commune was busy picking up the pieces of Pisa's collapse by enforcing its gains on Sardinia. For example, the small city of Sassari was itself a commune, but now subject to overall Genoese sovereignty.¹¹¹ Gains on this island, and the possibilities for extracting money from it, were one of Genoa's lasting benefits to the victory over Pisa. Predominance on Corsica and Sardinia made Genoa a Mediterranean power of the first rank (at least for a while). One might think this would have mattered to

107. For this context no one has surpassed Robert S. Lopez, *Benedetto Zaccaria: ammiraglio e mercante nella Genova del Duecento* (Messina, 1933; reprinted without the valuable appendix of documents, Genoa, 1996).

108. December 23, 1288, in *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*, ed. Eleonora Pallavicino, vol. 1, bk. 7 (Rome, 2011), 74–77. No customs tax on exported slaves, but if they were Christians the Genoese had to promise they would not be sold to Saracens. Jacopo would have approved these stipulations.

109. For context and translation of the treaty, see Peter M. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260–1290)* (Leiden, 1995).

110. *Liber Iurium Reipublicae Genuenses*, ed. C. Desimoni and L. T. Belgrano, vol. 2 (Turin, 1857), January 23, 1292, col. 273, a very old edition not yet entirely superseded. Jacopo does not mention this pope's deep interest in the Mongols (nor did he share it); see Antonino Franchi, *Nicolaus Papa IV* (Ascoli, 1990), 226. The pope used a Genoese intermediary, Buscarello di Gisulfo, to communicate with the Tartars.

111. *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*, March 24, 1294, pp. 273–82.

Jacopo because it certainly buttressed the case of seeing the 1290s as Genoa's zenith, but once Pisa was beaten, Jacopo lost sight of the consequences.

As we have seen, Jacopo knew that his peace efforts in Genoa had collapsed by the end of 1295, and by December bitter destructive civil strife resulted in the burning of the roof of San Lorenzo, his cathedral, and the sacking of his palace.¹¹² Here in brief is the story as contained in a series of documents in the *Liber Iurium*, part of a dossier about a transaction to which Jacopo was a party, so he certainly knew of it. On June 12, 1294, Brother Jacopo, archbishop of Genoa, made known to the bishops of Albenga, Ventimiglia, and Noli news about the lordships of San Remo and Ceriana, a port and a tiny town up in the mountains of the Riviera Ponente, extreme western Liguria.¹¹³ People were rebelling out there, and they should receive no support. This is the kind of trouble an archbishop who was also a secular lord endured, and little in Jacopo's training and professional experience had prepared him for this headache. On June 6, 1296, Jacopo received the right from Pope Boniface VIII to sell the castles (lordships) of San Remo and Ceriana in the diocese of Albenga.¹¹⁴ By this date, as we have seen, Jacopo had a sacked palace and a roofless cathedral, so he presumably needed the money. A major contract dated January 8, 1297, records Jacopo selling his lordships for L13,000, a huge sum, L12,000 in money in the bank of Gabriello Pinelli, and L3,000 [*sic*] in land and leases in nearby Bisagno.¹¹⁵ Jacopo's lordship was described as a *signoria*, and it included, besides the castles, all the rights of lordship, here principally from the administration of justice, and income from land. The commune of Genoa was in the process of acquiring these small lordships across Liguria in order to make sure they did not fall into other hands, and to settle a predictable stream of revenue for the cash-strapped government. No doubt Jacopo prudently deposited the money in a private bank, rather than the risky shares in the state debt the commune would have preferred to pay. From the commune's perspective this was not a major deal, but it did anchor Genoese authority in an area marking the hazy boundary with lords of Savoy and Provence. Perhaps it was not important enough to merit any notice in Jacopo's chronicle. But why then did he

112. CG, 412. Jacopo does not mention the fate of his palace, goods, and books; they appear in a later papal letter, as Monleone notes.

113. *Liber Iurium Reipublicae Genuenses*, June 12, 1294, cols. 316–17.

114. *Liber Iurium Reipublicae Genuenses*, June 6, 1296, cols. 328–30.

115. *Liber Iurium Reipublicae Genuenses*, January 8, 1297, cols. 331–38, and subsequent documents securing the commune's authority. The L3,000 was an estimate of the value of income-producing holdings, perhaps discounted here in real terms, or a sign of Jacopo's abilities as a negotiator?

mention the roof? In fact, his last notice of an event was the trouble Colonna cardinals were causing in Rome in 1297.¹¹⁶ Why was this important to Genoa? Jacopo does not say. His account of these five years is patchy and brief, not at all up to the standard of his predecessors.

His Own Historian

A last way to gage Jacopo's accuracy as a historian is to examine how he (rarely) inserts himself into his chronicle. Since he omits nearly everything about his own life, we should be able to find a thread connecting what he does tell us. Also, even in personal matters, Jacopo was capable of making mistakes. On one matter we must presume his accuracy: the list of his works he provides at the beginning of the section about the year 1292.¹¹⁷ Since we have just looked at the period of his episcopacy and his official role in some events, let us take the opportunity to look back to the beginning of his life.

Jacopo never mentions when he was born. Giovanni Monleone diligently investigated the matter and concluded that he was most likely born in 1229, now the commonly accepted date.¹¹⁸ This hypothesis depends on the first time Jacopo mentions himself in the chronicle. A total eclipse of the sun occurred in 1239, and he vividly recalls this event (because he could see stars during the day) as happening in his boyhood (*annos pueriles*).¹¹⁹ It seems reasonable to think of him as a ten-year-old, and it is interesting that this is one of the few times he responds to nature in any way. Another instance, to take these recollections out of order, was the great comet with its striking tail that he witnessed for forty days from August 1 in 1264 and recalled in striking detail.¹²⁰ Here is another sign that astronomy was the part of nature that stayed in his mind. Other contemporary witnesses in Europe agreed that this comet appeared in 1264.

116. CG, 414.

117. These works are, in order, *The Golden Legend*, two volumes of sermons on the saints, Sunday sermons and Lenten sermons, Marian sermons, and this chronicle. CG, 405. Many pseudepigrapha have been attributed to him, and Monleone rightly dismisses the possibility that he translated the Old and New Testaments into Italian: CG, 1:99–178, an exhaustive analysis of the matters; 148 on the Bible.

118. CG, 1:33. Jacopo so closely identifies with Genoa that everyone presumes he was born there and not Varazze, a place of little interest to him.

119. CG, 378.

120. CG, 390–91, for this and what follows. Other sources for comets in medieval Italy confirm the August 1264 date, also noted by the Florentine Giovanni Villani; see research by Piero Sicoli at the Osservatorio Astronomico di Brera, <http://www.brera.mi.astro.it>. Jacopo lived between the Halley's comets of 1222 and 1301.

The visit of Pope Innocent IV to his home city of Genoa on July 7, 1244, was a day of great joy in the city, as he was the first Genoese pope and supporting him was part of Genoa's policy of opposing Frederick II and the Pisans.¹²¹ Jacopo recalled that this event, occurring in his *adolescencia*, by the Savior's grace inspired him to join the Order of Preachers, which subsequently educated him and in which he intended to remain into his old age.¹²² This was the key decision determining his entire future. The age of fifteen or so seems about right for this choice. By now this memory was nearly fifty years old, and what Jacopo chooses to note is that he received his education from the friars. His contemporary the great lexicographer Giovanni Balbi was also raised in the Dominican convent, at the time of its greatest prestige, patronized by the leading Doria and Spinola families.¹²³ The convent was also the center of learning in Genoa, a city that would not have a university for centuries. Being a Dominican was Jacopo's core identity, and it shaped his mind and career. It seems inconceivable that Jacopo never attended university, but he does not give the slightest hint about any advanced learning or where it may have taken place. Certainly Innocent IV did not inspire him to be a canon lawyer, so we may rule out that path. Jacopo shows familiarity with texts by his fellow Dominicans Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, and he had a smattering of scientific knowledge and an interest in medicine; all these, in addition to his priesthood, suggest that he must have been to university. But wherever this place was, and I guess it was on his side of the Alps so probably Bologna, he simply did not care to write about the experience.¹²⁴ Yet almost every page of his writing betrays characteristic habits of scholastic thinking and writing.

The last event we will consider, linking the two parts of his career, is Jacopo's description of how he became Genoa's eighth archbishop in 1292.¹²⁵ Jacopo's great predecessor as historian Caffaro had in the last year of his work described how in 1163 the electors selected Ugone as archbishop. Three abbots, two provosts of monasteries, three respected priests, and three members

121. The anonymous contemporary annalists described the papal visit in detail: *Annales Iamuen-*
ses, 3:151–56, on his way to safety in Lyon.

122. CG, 382.

123. Sibelina Spinola buried at the church of the Dominicans in 1278: ASG, CN, Cart. N. 79, 283r–v; Contessa Doria in 1287: Cart. N. 9 parte II, 27v–28r.

124. Bertini Guidetti (Iacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, 16) has Jacopo at these general meetings of the Dominicans: 1267 Bologna (where she reasonably claims he met Aquinas), 1271 Montpellier (where he may have met Albertus Magnus), 1273 Pest, 1274 Lyon, 1277 Bordeaux, 1281 Bologna.

125. CG, 403–4, for these details.

of the cathedral chapter elected the archdeacon of Genoa as entirely worthy, which he proved to be.¹²⁶ These circumstances, known to Jacopo from his readings in Caffaro and his successors about elections in the twelfth century, were very different from the events bringing Jacopo to the position. Pope Nicholas IV, a Franciscan, “created” or named Jacopo archbishop, but then died before he could confer a pallium, a sign of the office, on Jacopo, so a cardinal substituted at this ceremony. By this time free election had vanished in Genoa (as in much of Europe). Locally, the enduring sway of the Fieschi family and its cardinals over the church in Liguria meant that they were in control. Jacopo could not have become archbishop without the approval of these people, or for that matter the Doria and Spinola. At any rate, Jacopo simply observed that a delegation of leading Genoese had approached Pope Nicholas IV asking that the vacancy be filled, also noting that he was reverently received by the people when he speedily returned to Genoa.¹²⁷ He omitted mentioning the clergy in this joy; perhaps some of them had read about a different church in which they had the determining say in such matters.

This is all Jacopo tells us about himself in the years from 1239 to 1292, not much for fifty-three years of life. Before we turn finally to the Marian sermons Jacopo composed in these same years, let us look briefly at an appropriate omission, the family connections of this preacher. Giovanni Monleone found the cartulary of the notary Jacopo used, and he located a nephew Lanzerotto, canon of San Lorenzo (nepotism?), and a Marietta with four daughters, wife of the late Federico da Varagine, possibly Jacopo's brother.¹²⁸ These four women may have been looking to Uncle Jacopo for some help with dowries, possibly the reason why he did not discuss the topic in his chronicle? This small kinship network, linked together by ties of blood and property, probably became more prosperous as a result of Jacopo's elevation to archbishop of Genoa. These few notices testify to his basic humble reticence, a facet of his character with deep roots, possibly in his Dominican training and Christian values. Jacopo also skipped over nearly all of his activities as a prominent Dominican, including his role as one of three leading preachers sent by the cardinals to the chapter meeting at Ferrara in 1288.¹²⁹

126. *Annales Ianuenses: Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, vol. 1, 1099–1173, ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano (Genoa, 1890), 75, Ugone subsequently installed by the clergy and people; Caffaro wrote about an independent, self-governing church in Genoa.

127. *CG*, 402.

128. For these family matters, see *CG*, 1:76–83.

129. For these details, see William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*, vol. 1, *Origin and Growth to 1500* (New York, 1966), 225–26 and 246 n. 82.

His role was to bring the cardinals' message that they wanted Master General Munio removed as head of the order, but this effort failed and Jacopo testified to Munio's good character, a sign of his independent mind.

When summarizing Jacopo's work as a historian, we are entitled to ask a basic question: why did he write at all? It is true that official history had ended with the death of Jacopo Doria, and in his time factional strife was so prevalent in Genoa that possibly only the neutral archbishop was in any position to be objective about current events. Jacopo was inevitably associated with the Guelf faction in Genoa, but he was no fanatic. (In this too he resembled Dante.) If we want to fathom Jacopo's mind as historian, we should return to the veiled answer about motive with which he began his chronicle—the parable of the talents. Jacopo had a stock of abilities, reading, and experiences, and a lifetime habit of being continuously occupied in a writing project of some kind. Up to this point in his life he had concentrated exclusively on spiritual writing of saints' lives and hundreds of sermons. These were entirely appropriate endeavors for a Dominican leader. Jacopo knew that he had God-given abilities in synthesizing vast amounts of information into an orderly presentation. In these circumstances, it would be sinful to conceal his gifts and not to become a historian.

Epilogue

Let me summarize Jacopo's late habits of thought by looking again at sermons, this time from what was probably his last work, a collection of 161 model exegetical sermons of varying lengths known as the *Marian Sermons*.¹ His writing interests changed over time from sermons and saints' lives to history, but he circled back to his first love. A good preacher recounts the fruits of long biblical studies. Jacopo's "late style" was a return to his roots, model sermons, with the benefit of a lifetime of experience as a reader and writer.² These models appear in order of words from A to V, and roughly alphabetical order within the letter. The sermon below is the second one beginning with the letter E. Ivory (*ebur*), elephant (*elephas*), elect (*electa*), and alms (*elymosinaria*) are the words Jacopo selected, from all possible ones (not, for example, excellence) as the themes for these

1. I used this edition Jacopo da Varagine, *Mariale sive sermones de beata Maria virgine* (Paris, 1503); all references to folio within the text are to this edition. Stefania Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Jacopo da Varazze: Il potere delle immagini nel Duecento* (Florence, 1998), 43, notes the special quality of these late sermons but is clear that they are still sermons. This collection has no introduction save a brief notice of the author, but there is a brief prologue, at the end before the index, considered below.

2. The modern, secular approach to late style does not help to see Jacopo rightly; I am drawn to the idea by Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature against the Grain* (New York, 2006), but, as on 7, there is nothing against the grain in Jacopo's establishment point of view.

letter E sermons. I did not choose this sermon at random. As Jacopo picked his themes, and in some cases, like moon or salutation, he wrote more than one sermon on it, he showed what he valued about religious imagery. He had already written sermons where the topics suggested themselves (saints' days) or were dictated by the demands of the liturgical calendar. In the case of the Marian sermons he was in theological as well as artistic control of their number and subjects. In brief, he sat down and decided to write a sermon comparing Mary to an elephant.³ Why would he do that?

Famous preachers for centuries turned their minds toward composing Marian sermons. Jacopo was original in producing so many model sermons, indexed by topic. Most of the time Jacopo picked a stark noun as the topic of the sermon—about thirty instances.⁴ These nouns often were Mary's physical qualities (face, milk, womb) or things that happened to her. Mary's physicality was important to Jacopo, and he explains all the latest thinking about her body, from its perpetual purity and virginity to its ascent directly to heaven. Jacopo grouped Mary's other experiences and qualities according to the verb he used to indicate them, though these categories are a little blurry at the edges. *Fuit*, "had been," evoked the historical Mary who had experienced the few facts about her revealed in scripture: an annunciation, pregnancy, marriage, childbirth, motherhood, and grief. In a sermon on Mary's words Jacopo directly faced this problem, noting they only occurred in seven scriptural passages (92v). Finding the good in any situation, he praised Mary's words as not prolix but few and brief. (About twenty sermons fall into this category concerning the past.) *Habuit*, "had," is another past tense verb Jacopo used only five times to indicate experiences, especially grace, that Mary possessed from one moment in time when she received them. *Dicitur*, "is said to be," gave Jacopo the chance to express a synonym for Mary, a sign showing what she means. These synonyms are mostly things, many celestial like a star, the moon, or light, others expected things like a lily, dove, or Virgin. A few, like neck or bee, seem out of place or a challenge to explain. Once one sees that the neck connects the body and head the sermon falls neatly into place (17v). (Another twenty comprise this category.) *Signat*,

3. The editors of Federico Visconti's 106 sermons provide numerous indices, including a fine thematic index, and they found no reference to an elephant in any of his sermons. Giovanni Farris, *Significati spirituali nei "Sermones" di Jacopo Da Varazze e nella "Divina Commedia"* (Savona, 1998), a book on the points of similarity (not influence) between Jacopo and Dante, picked up some mentions of elephants in other sermons, but not this one concerning Mary.

4. Many sermons are not easily classified, so I do not make much of this analysis, except to suggest categories into which Jacopo placed his alphabetical topics.

“marks out” or “signifies,” allowed Jacopo to introduce a simile or allegory; Mary is like something needing to be explained. All these things, ranging from fragrances to plants and the only mammal, the elephant, are pleasant and attractive. Sixteen sermons are in this category. “Candle” is perhaps the most specific topic in the sense that it gave Jacopo the occasion to revisit an old theme, Candlemas, the Purification of the Virgin, that had engaged him for decades.

An unexpected and potentially the most revealing sermon concerned how Mary signified dew (*ros*). For Jacopo this dew symbolized the Incarnation of Christ through the fertility of Mary (77r). Since the Bible mentions dew many times, all Jacopo needed to do was consult some type of concordance, turn the crank, and again the sermon practically wrote itself. Jacopo displayed more talent than this, however, by marbling into the sermon a formidable array of scriptural passages from Job, Hosea, Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, and Hebrews, none of them about dew. The challenge of the elephant was that it does not appear in the Bible, and so Jacopo had to use his imagination to make something of it, and mainly for this reason it is the sermon translated below. Even ivory occurs once in scripture, but no elephants. Elephants had begun to appear in thirteenth-century Italy, most notably in the earliest animal collections of Emperor Frederick II in the Mezzogiorno. It is barely possible that Jacopo had actually seen one, hence his interest, though he would have just as easily come across it in the many bestiaries (zoos in books) found everywhere in medieval Europe. Still, to repeat, it is the only mammal. Before investigating the elephant sermon, let us briefly look at some general features and insights that can be gleaned from the collection as a whole.

Throughout this study the evidence on what we may inaccurately label as misogynism has proved inadequate to explain Jacopo’s complex views on women. Simply because he presents 161 model sermons on a particular woman, Mary, it does not prove that he had positive attitudes toward the rest. If we place this problem in the context of other issues, we may be in a better position to assess it. Jacopo’s favorite authorities remain Bernard, Augustine, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Ambrose, Bede, Pseudo-Denis, Anselm, and Hugh of St. Victor, but as we will see, a few fresh minor authors also appear, perhaps suggesting his further reading. Above all these, Jacopo’s magisterial command of the Bible supplied him with by far the most quotations and images. So suffused are these sermons with scriptural language that it is hard sometimes to figure out where Jacopo’s language actually begins and the Bible stops. He wrote in a very biblical style. Matthew and Ecclesiasticus remain his favorite books, but two new ones repeatedly

crop up in these sermons. The book of Judith tells the remarkable story of a powerful woman saving her people by cutting off the head of Holofernes, and Jacopo repeatedly turns to it throughout these sermons. In the same vein the story of Esther is another account of salvation. No female saint, past or recent, quite lived up to the feats of these women. Bernard's homilies on Mary inspired Jacopo, and there were so many sermons by Augustine and Chrysostom to read and reread that we should not be surprised to find these works here. Though these authorities and the habits of his own patriarchal mind often suggested words and ideas at best hostile toward women or at least suspicious of them, Mary's completely positive qualities overwhelmed this male perspective in these sermons, if not in the Genoese history Jacopo was writing at the same time.

That Mary was a Jew of royal descent was in its way a problem for Jacopo, which he solved by never mentioning or alluding to the fact, or the religion or ethnicity of any of the holy people he was writing about—Mary, Joseph, Anna, Simeon, John the Baptist, and other Jews. By now we know what to expect when Jacopo invokes them. In a sermon on Mary as a rose it should not shock us to see the Jews inevitably appearing as the thorns (78r). In scholastic fashion, Jacopo found four comparisons: the Jews were proud, Mary humble; the Jews were filled with vices, Mary filled with grace; the Jews were faithless, Mary filled with faith; the Jews had earthly desires, Mary's were heavenly. Perhaps Jacopo found these contrasts somewhere in the vast trove of Marian sermons, but Judith and Esther did not block his use of them; nor were they ever called Hebrews or Jews. From first to last Jacopo's anti-Judaism (at least) was a touchstone of his thinking.

Since we have seen the important place Jacopo assigned to marriage in his history, we should not be surprised that this theme, so basic to the story of Mary and Joseph, appears frequently in these sermons. He agreed with Augustine that Mary was a perpetual virgin, so her union with Joseph was a *maritalis societas* (83r), a marital partnership if we translate the second word along the terms of a type of commercial joint venture so frequently appearing in Genoese notarial records.⁵ Concerning Mary as a mother Jacopo wrote an entire sermon on her milk, noting what was in his age a scientific commonplace that it was twice-cooked blood (44r), but he was not troubled by a lactating virgin. Here too he credited Mary as mother as playing the

5. Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1999), 231–32, for some thoughts on Mary's marriage. Jacopo also agreed with Bernard that when the Virgin gave birth there was no pain or suffering (*SM*, 59v).

significant role in the special education of Jesus (55v). Jacopo understood that Mary was an exemplary widow for far longer than she was a wife. Though Jacopo devoted no sermon to *Vidua*, he frequently mentioned widowhood, Mary's and her mother Anna's. As a model of a good widow, Mary's most distinctive trait was her invisibility, brought in at last to mourn at the cross. This could be a somber message to thirteenth-century widows to remain secluded and out of public view.

Besides being a model wife, mother, and widow, Mary was also a self-proclaimed handmaiden of the Lord. The word Jacopo uses, *ancilla*, frequently applied to female slaves in Genoa, does not in this case mean that, for Mary was no one's slave. When he thought about an exemplary female servant these images came to mind: humble like Esther, a reconciler like Abigail (1 Sam. 25), a fighter like Judith, and obedient like Mary—this last quality the one he seems to value above the others (4r). Thinking about the idea of the bitterness or saltiness of the sea, Jacopo was reminded of another scriptural woman, Naomi, who experienced a period of bitterness and claimed the noun as her name (51r). All the women compared to Mary are Old Testament characters, possibly testifying to Jacopo's deeper reading in older scriptures, as do his more frequent references to Genesis and Kings. Virtuous or strong-willed pagan women have completely dropped out of the picture, as have all Christian women since biblical times, not one saint or holy woman finding notice in any of these sermons. Nor was this the right place for another take on the other Marys in the New Testament, a subject Jacopo must have rightly thought he had already addressed, if not exhausted.

What little influences classical sources ever had on Jacopo have almost disappeared by the time he wrote these sermons.⁶ Perhaps he had come to think they had no place in elucidating Marian themes. He still has something to say about the good earth, but by now he credits the term to Augustine's book on the Trinity and says nothing about Virgil.⁷ A tactful sermon on Mary's bedchamber, which he nevertheless compared to her womb, learnedly

6. A reference to Pliny the Elder (*SM*, 61v) on how the Athenians used an olive wreath to symbolize victory is expressed in language nothing like anything Pliny wrote ("Nam sicut dicit Plinius Olim apud Athenas victores consueverunt coronari ramis olivarum"—many variants checked in Brepols Library of Latin Literature with no result), so it must come from some other source, not Damian, who instead wrote about palms. Since nothing from Pliny's long entry on elephants (book 15) appears in the model sermon translated below, I think we can continue with the assumption that Jacopo has no direct knowledge of Pliny's *Natural History*. A brief tag from Seneca on quiet (*SM*, 74r) does not change the picture of Jacopo and the classics.

7. We know Augustine read Virgil, but this is another sign Jacopo did not emulate his mentor in all things.

derived the term in Latin, *thalamus*, from the name of one of the rapists of the Sabine women who subsequently married his victim (85v).⁸ (Jacopo's love of etymologies, the more arcane or fanciful the better, remained a constant during his career in writing.) He is still willing to cite Aristotle as an authority on bees (5v) or the incorruptibility of gold (45v) or the late Roman agricultural writer Palladius (a new reference) on the almond (3v), but such notices are rare. Medieval authors making what seems to me either new or more frequent appearances are Bishop Fulbert of Chartres (†1028) (10r on Mary as Augusta and Empress), the saintly Abbot Odilo of Cluny (962–1049) (43r, 69v, and 95r on the fire of the Holy Spirit, Mary's sweetness, and pilgrimages), Bishop Peter of Ravenna (†450) (89v on the face and voice of angels), and Archbishop Idelphonsus of Toledo (†667) (81r on purification).

What remains striking is the invisibility of more contemporary writers, and leaving aside all the other possibilities we are entitled to wonder again about his fellow Dominicans Albertus Magnus and Aquinas, among others.⁹ Possibly having met them in life somehow diminished their appeal? After his university days he increasingly no longer cared to read or remember these authors. His scholastic habits of analysis, formed early and quite durable, were by now his own, and he did not need any lessons on them. Jacopo's near contemporary, Salimbene de Adam da Parma, passed a few months from late 1248 to early 1249 in the Franciscan convent in Genoa.¹⁰ Salimbene had vivid memories of this stay, during which he became a priest. Chatty on the Franciscans, he had nothing at all to say about the Dominicans in Genoa. His chronicle, which continued to 1287, never mentioned Jacopo. These self-isolating circles of Franciscans or Dominicans in Genoa or in northern Italy help to explain why Jacopo never had anything specific to say about Franciscans in Genoa, let alone the great men of that order, or his own.

8. Jacopo probably found this story in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, 15.3.6, or one of the subsequent lexicographers, and not in a classical work.

9. Michèle Mulchahey notes the controversies surrounding some of Aquinas's ideas in the 1270s and 1280s, "*First the Bow Is Bent in Study*": *Dominican Education before 1500* (Toronto, 1998), 152–54, so it is perhaps not surprising that the cautious Jacopo does not cite him. Salimbene de Adam da Parma frequently mentioned his contemporary, the theologian and Master of the Franciscan order Bonaventura da Bagnoreggio; see his *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia and Berardo Rossi (Parma, 2007).

10. For this and what follows, see Salimbene de Adam da Parma, *Cronica*, 886–930. Jacopo was probably at school in Bologna around this time.

The Elephant Sermon

The elephant signifies the Virgin, according to Augustine.¹¹ The elephant has many commendable features. For among the other large animals it is obedient, excelling in good sense and so easily domesticated, strong, and free from rage. It is an enemy to dragons, and therefore the Virgin Mary may be compared to an elephant. First, because an elephant is obedient, super obedient, to its rescuers. For it is said that when captured and gravely wounded by its hunter, the elephant comes to imagine the one wanting to buy it as its liberator. And so the elephant always loves and obeys him. This obedience had been excellent in the Blessed Virgin, who had not only obeyed her superior in God when she said, “Behold the handmaiden of the Lord” [Luke 1:38],¹² but also obeyed her inferior Elizabeth with whom she stayed for three months and helped in her delivery of a child. Also she obeyed her equal, that is, Joseph, for as much as he was her husband, she was his equal. For when pregnant she followed him to Bethlehem and following him she went to and returned from Egypt.

Second, the elephant is much esteemed for its sense and intelligence; by the will of its master it honors the king. It drinks water from a river or some place and showers bystanders. The Blessed Virgin, however, stands out above angels and men in sense and intelligence; a profound mystery of God, she knows more than the rest. Bernard, in a homily on *Missus Est* “The power of the Most High will overshadow you” [Luke 1:35], “Who, indeed, can understand, except perhaps she who alone deserved to have this most blessed experience, who can grasp with his intelligence and discern with his reason not only the way in which the inaccessible splendor could pour itself out into a

11. *SM*, 27v–28r. This attribution to Augustine in the sermon rests on A and a symbol that can mean Augustine, but it may be some other author whose name begins with A, certainly not in this context Aristotle. A search of the Brepols databases (accessed July 9, 2013) found eleven instances where Augustine discussed elephants, once in the context of dragons, but not Mary. None of the following derives from the definition of *elephas* in Giovanni Balbi, *Catholicon* (Mainz, 1460), at *elephantus*, where the elephant is described as wonderfully chaste because when *he* loses *his* spouse *he* remains chaste and wanders in the woods, not relevant to Mary.

12. As usual with Jacopo, he did not supply a citation to Luke in a case where he thought the passage was known to all his readers, presumably preachers and priests. I indicate such citations in brackets.

virginal womb?”¹³ For the Trinity was in her alone, when alone in the Virgin only, it wished to be absorbed, given only to her to experience.

Third, the elephant is very domesticatable since it is easily trained and lives peacefully with people. The Blessed Virgin was well brought up in conforming her behavior. For she did not exist for a single person but for all in common. For she wanted to join together with virgins and for that reason she pledged her virginity; she wanted to dwell with married people so for that reason she consented to marriage. She wanted to live with the widows and so for that reason, after the death of Joseph, she lived a widow's life. She was also a person for all people since she was zealous to please God, men, and angels. Bernard, in a certain sermon, “Mary is called blessed and full of grace because she was pleasing to God, men, and angels. Pleasing to God through humility, to the angels by virginity, to men by fruitfulness.”¹⁴

Fourth, the elephant is naturally kind though in appearance it may seem in rage or severe.¹⁵ In battle, however, it may be aroused, if it be provoked too much. Thus the Blessed Virgin does not have anger toward anyone, or rage or indignation, but is completely sweet and mild. Bernard, in a homily on *Missus Est*, “Who in human frailness should fear to go to Mary; nothing in her is forbidding, nothing in her is terrifying, but all is mild.” She is nevertheless severe to the demons when she battles against them for us. As it is said in Canticles 6 [:10] “as awe-inspiring as bannered troops.” It turns out she is severe in judgment on the sinners since they have provoked God in their evil works. Hence she will no longer pray for them nor will she free them any more from punishment. Thus Mary is like a bee who naturally makes honey. In appearance the Virgin fights when she is provoked. Thus the natural duty of the Virgin is to have sweetness in appearance, though in judgment against the wicked she will have the severity of justice.

Fifth, the elephant fights against the dragon and in two ways beats him. First, by pounding away with his head, and then the dragon

13. Jacopo accurately quotes here from Bernard of Clairvaux, *Homiliae super “missus Est,”* Homily 4 par. 4, in his *Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais (Rome, 1966), 4:50. I use the English translation by Marie-Bernard Saïd and Grace Perigo, *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary* (Kalamazoo, 1979), 49. Finding the passages from what Jacopo vaguely cites is made possible by the Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A. Unlike Jacopo, Bernard cites only the Bible in his homilies on Mary, and mentions no elephants.

14. This passage appears in a collection of diverse sermons, in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera*, 6:266, closely paraphrased.

15. I have translated Jacopo's scholastic *accidentaliter* as “in appearance.”

cries out in terror, as in Micah 1 [:8], “and a lamenting face like the dragon.”¹⁶ Second, by the force of water projected into the dragon’s face. For the elephant takes up water in a river and when he sees the dragon approaching him he spurts the water with his trunk into the dragon’s face. Thus the elephant blinds him and chases him away. In the same way the Virgin conquers the devil. First when she beats down the devil’s head, that is, his pride, Genesis 2 [actually 3:15], “she will strike at your head”;¹⁷ Habakkuk 3 [:13], “you crush the head of the wicked” etc., for thus the devil conquered Eve through pride, so he is conquered by Mary by means of true humility. Bernard, “Eve through pride did not consider herself to be a creature of God and did not wish to please Him.”¹⁸ The Virgin Mary humbly submitted herself as a servant, to be called such. This Virgin is chosen. Second, she beats the devil after a fashion through blinding him by spurting water into his face. The devil, however, will be looking for any virgin who may conceive, so that he can know the mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation. But the Virgin will blind him and throw water into his face. Thus she will keep this mystery for those men she wants to know. Bernard, “Thus the Virgin Mary is betrothed, so that by this holy [deed] she is hidden from the dogs” and the devil is excluded from the secret heavenly hosts.¹⁹ Ambrose. Thus God will conceal the sacrament of His birth, so that the prince of this world may not know it, for our salvation, expiated through Christ crucified.²⁰

The first point to observe about this sermon is that there is nothing particular about it with respect to time and place. It might have been written at almost any moment in the first fifteen centuries of Christianity, and in any place besides the archiepiscopal palace in Genoa where this was most likely composed in the early 1290s. Jacopo stripped out from these model sermons any topical or timely reference that would have detracted from its use by anyone, anywhere. A sermon on the star of the sea (the polar or North

16. Jerome has substituted a dragon for the actual jackal in Micah 1:8, “faciam planctum velut draconum.”

17. Jacopo has made God’s prophesy specific to Mary. There may also be an echo of Ps. 74:13–14, smashing heads of dragons on the waters.

18. I have not found where Bernard expressed this thought.

19. A short phrase from Bernard, *Homiliae*, in *Opera*, 4:30; the devil is Jacopo’s idea.

20. There is a little 1 Cor. 2:8 here, and John 12:31–32. It resembles “principum huius saeculi cognovit. Si enim cognovissent, numquam dominum maiestas crucifixissent.” Ambrose, *De fide*, Brepols Library of Latin Texts, Series A, accessed July 5, 2013.

Star), naturally concerns Mary because she also is fixed and does not move into someone else's house but stays a widow. Jacopo notes that this star is commonly called the *transmontana*, the star across the mountains, obliquely revealing that he sees it from the southern side of the Alps (84r). This vague hint is the only sign Jacopo supplies about the context in which he wrote. If we remember his intended audience, fellow preachers across Europe, this result is no surprise.

The second point concerns the vast gulf in sensibility separating Jacopo from most modern readers. In my view Jacopo probably considered this sermon to be a tour de force proving that he could make a fine sermon out of literally anything. Some current readers might prefer to conclude that this sermon is some type of elaborate joke, or nonsensical, or the product of someone not quite in his right mind. I think we can dispense with the possibility of humor; there is none of that in these sermons. He would not have included anything he thought derogatory to Mary, heretical, or lacking in good sense, so we must accept this sermon on its own terms as serious. For that reason we must also conclude that the analogy between Mary and an elephant, however bizarre it may now appear, somehow struck Jacopo as appropriate. Remembering that Jacopo singled out obedience, intelligence (good sense), and trainability as the elephant's distinctive traits, and that it was the largest land animal, and that the lamb meant her son, what other animal might Jacopo have picked? None. Whatever elephant Jacopo may have seen, he would have been struck by observing (or reading about) its remarkable use of its trunk to spray water. Though he also evokes the image of a war elephant battling enemies, this was not something he ever saw but certainly learned about through reading. There were old pieces of lore about the elephant and its fear of a tiny creature, the mouse, or its hatred of snakes, serpents, and by inference dragons. Jacopo sees Mary in a series of binary contrasts, somehow equal to Joseph but obedient, sweet and mild but potentially fierce against sinners. In his mind Jacopo sees the fighting elephant as using its trunk as a nozzle to blind its opponents, far from the harmless spray he may have seen or experienced in a menagerie. (Head knocking was not going to work as a Marian metaphor.) The elephant was also a proverbial good mother.

Jacopo was trying to find a way to make sense of just how the gentle Mary could defeat the devil. He is far from some simplistic literal idea of her somehow squirting water into his eyes, but he does not see Mary's power as coming from a weapon or some agency but something spiritual equally capable of beating the devil. We may think this might have been managed by using light or some type of mirror, and in fact Jacopo has Marian sermons

on exactly these themes (two on *lux*, 48v–50r, and *speculum*, 82v–83r), but unlike his contemporary Roger Bacon, he saw no military applications to them.²¹ For Jacopo if Mary was to fight and defeat the devil, he needed a symbol to explain how this might happen. In Mary's case he had her additional motive of desiring to conceal from the devil the birth of her child. Why remains unclear, but it certainly seems like a good idea, just as the flight to Egypt was to escape the massacre of the innocents. Mary's war against the devil consisted of blinding him so that he would not see potential victims, all (except Jesus and Mary) in fact powerless against him, unless aided. Seeing the devil as a snake, serpent, or dragon was a commonplace. St. George took care of this in his way. Jacopo modestly did not think he was capable of explaining how divine power worked except by analogy, hence the elephant. The devil's reality and menace were never far from Jacopo's thoughts.

Third, as an exemplary wife, mother, and widow, Mary was to Jacopo an ideal role model for women at all life stages from cradle to grave. By analogy Jacopo extracted the best qualities needed for these roles: obedience, good sense, strength, and trainability. It is important to note that some of the elephant's best qualities resulted from the gratitude it felt to its rescuer. From what did a husband rescue a wife—the scandal of premarital pregnancy? In thirteenth-century Genoa, the answer would clearly also be poverty and vulnerability, to say the least. The union between Joseph and Mary, however defined, was a curious image of equality because in so many ways Mary was far more important than her husband. Yet because there was an equable spiritual element to a proper marriage, this saved Joseph from oblivion, as did his masculinity, however depreciated.

Finally, in any society with slaves, being an obedient handmaiden, servant, or *ancilla* was bound to be a complex matter. Again we have a paradox. Though gentle and mild, Mary's virtues were not entirely passive, and in her way she could express righteous anger against sinners or fight the devil. When Jacopo thought about Mary or the mighty elephant, he saw the common thread defining obedience as deriving from being trained, domesticated, or grateful. This does not imply wildness in women so much as it does an acute understanding of human nature, which did not take easily to hierarchy and subordination between the sexes, or between master and slave. The slave owner had the right to compel obedience through any act of violence, but there must have always been the worry that true loyalty was not enforced by the whip or chains. Even the elephant had in gratitude a better motive than

21. See Amanda Power, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom* (Cambridge, 2013), 204–5.

fear. In the gray area of being a handmaiden, a single and vulnerable woman in an inferior status resembling slavery if not actually so, Mary spoke words of humble acceptance. This compliance, prompted by reverence, was what Jacopo meant by the awkward concepts of being domesticated or trained. And yet, whatever Jacopo thought about women in general, this one was as far as possible from an ordinary wife or domestic to be ordered about. Powerful in her own right, Mary also had God as her patron, and there is no doubt Jacopo wanted to be her friend.

Operating within the confines of the model sermon genre, Jacopo did not write an exordium justifying a sermon on Mary and the elephant. By abruptly concluding, Jacopo left to his readers the task of explaining to their audiences how to apply the lessons of this sermon. Just as he left anecdotes and examples to the preacher's discretion, the models allowed for a wide scope for the creativity of others. Although it is a pity that we do not have a single example of a full-blown sermon by Jacopo, nonetheless we can conclude this book by doing something Jacopo expected of a good listener, not a learned analysis of the sermon.

Application

As a preacher, hagiographer, and historian, Jacopo hoped his listeners and readers would apply what they learned from him to the duties of being a citizen, a member of a family, and a Christian. The last words Jacopo may have written appear at the end of his sermons (98v), though they are called a prologue, maybe to the index.²²

22. I think in this last occasion it is fitting to supply what may very well have been Jacopo's last words as a writer. This prologue is almost identical to the one Bertini Guidetti cites in her *I Sermones di Iacopo da Varazze*, 43, from another edition, Venice 1590, except the one I used has the additional last sentence. "Cogitavi dies antiquos et annos eternos in mente habui. Quoniam senili etate confectus sum: et celestis patrie desidero anxius. ideo dies antiquos vite mee saepe cogito. et annos eternos vite perpetue frequenter in mente recolo vel revolvo. ut sic veraciter possim dicere cum propheta: Cogitavi dies antiquos etc. Utraque autem cogitatio tam etatis senilis quam vite celestis salubriter me inducit ne in tempore parvo quod restat animus meus torpescat ingnavo vel desidia resolvatur. sed potius in dei laudem et gloriose matris eius dies antiquos meos finiant. ut sic annos eternos feliciter apprehendam. Et quamvis pontificali infula insignatus. quamvis in episcopali speculo constitutus. tamen cito in cinerem resolver et in ventrem communis matris cito ingrediar: ut ibidem me servum ad requiem. Donec in beata resurrectione me pariat ad salutem. Quis igitur gloriosa virgo Maria in se operantes a peccato praeservat: et se laudantes copiose remunerat ipsa dicento Qui elucidant me vitam eternam habebunt et qui operantur in me non peccabunt. Ideo volens sue commendationi operam dare et virgineis laudes ipsam depromere. praesens opusculum ipsa inspirante incepti et ad finem perduxi debitum ipsa adiuvante. Volui autem librum cum hunc secundum ordinem litterarum alphabeti distinguere ut quilibet posit quid voluerit invenire."

“I consider the days of old, the eternal years I have in mind” [Ps. 77:6–7]. Because I have reached old age, I eagerly yearn for my heavenly home. Therefore I often think about the days of old, my life, and the eternal years of everlasting life. I frequently recollect them and turn them over in my mind, so that I may say truly with the prophet, “I consider the days of old” etc. However, thinking leads me advantageously on both hands to ponder old age as much as eternal life, lest in the short time remaining my soul grows torpid, lazy, or idle and is weakened, but rather in praise of God and His glorious mother I should finish my days so that I may happily obtain eternal life. However much singled out in priestly marks of distinction or established in episcopal eminence, nonetheless I will soon turn to ashes and I will soon come to the breast of the common mother, so that I come as a slave to rest. It also brings forth for me salvation in the blessed resurrection.

Therefore whoever has the glorious Virgin Mary working inside him will be preserved from sin, and whoever abundantly praises her internally will be rewarded, as is said, “They who make me known will have eternal life” [Ecclus. 24:31] and “those who devote themselves to me will not sin” [Ecclus. 24:30]. Therefore wanting by her direction to present this work and to benefit from her virginal praises, I began this current book by her inspiration and I have continued to the end to pay the debt with her help. I wanted, however, to mark out this book according to the order of the letters in the alphabet so that anyone may be able to find in it what he will want.

The preacher, hagiographer, and historian was clearly pondering the end of his life, and his real *patria*, not Genoa but heaven. It is fitting that he cites the Psalms and Ecclesiasticus, two of his favorite biblical books, and no other source to explain his frame of mind. Poised in his midsixties between the end of his years and the beginning of the next life, Jacopo had a clear sense that his time was short, and he decided to spend it as he had passed his life, by working. He enjoyed the episcopal dignity of being archbishop of Genoa, but it is not clear what priestly honors (Dominican offices?) he had received beyond the pallium of his office, certainly not a cardinal's hat. Jacopo used the word *servus* (slave) to describe his weary person, all too ready for heavenly rest. In a Genoese milieu, the choice of this word, so fraught with the realities of slavery in the city, once again shows how a free person can self-identify with slavery, and in a sense domesticate it, make it part of the surround of life, even if only in allegory. He seems comforted by the idea that the Virgin Mary was working within him to keep him from sin. To repay

this help (usually attributed to the Holy Spirit) he wrote 161 model sermons in her honor, and with characteristic tidiness of his Genoese and scholastic mind, he arranged them in alphabetical order to help his readers, and then to index them.

I began this book with three goals. First, to study Jacopo da Varagine by considering all of his works as a preacher, hagiographer, and historian. This approach, by definition intertextual, has made a start in overcoming the barriers separating the students of his books by genre. By paying close attention to how Jacopo used the Latin language in this context, we have been able to distinguish his explicit and implicit meanings, and the habits of association that special words prompted in his mind—no clearer cases than Mary and Jew. Jacopo's life work comprised a great encyclopedia of Christianity, or a veritable *Summa Christiana*. The volumes of sermons, saints' lives, and other essays, and his history need to be read in the context of the entirety of his project. Second, to include Genoa, the city in which he was probably born and certainly died. Saints and sermons explicitly reflected almost nothing of this milieu, but the chronicle shows how deeply Jacopo had thought about Genoese political and social history. Mistakes, selection, and style all displayed his historical mind at work, and the strong value he placed on faith, citizenship, and the family as the bedrock of Genoese society. Third, since Jacopo has sometimes been portrayed as an industrious banal repurposer of other peoples' ideas and information, we have spent some effort in uncovering what he read (or cited—not the same thing). This wide reading, and a little experience, in turn helped to make him a writer, and his words are the best guides to his thoughts. We have found that he was capable of startling originality of thought on topics ranging from slavery to the circumstances of Jesus' birth. The scope of Jacopo's ambition to write about nearly everything required that he often depend on the work of others. Situating his writing in a scholarly context should not diminish our appreciation for his creativity, especially in the grand sweep of what Jacopo set out to accomplish. After all, his fine tuning and final drafts are his own work, no matter how much of his favorite books or the liturgy seeped into them.

Looking at Jacopo as a complete person and writer, we are obligated to ask what sort of religious experiences did he know and think about? William James concluded that the differences among people on these matters derived from their emotional levels, not their intellectual abilities.²³ Jacopo's writings

23. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1982), 261–70.

reveal a great deal about his education and habits and skills in thinking, but almost nothing concerning what he felt about religion or anything else. Recounting many miracles and saints' lives, spending a life in preaching, this reticent man revealed little about his likes and dislikes, beyond the common antisemitic and homophobic values of his time. Jacopo was not interested in individual motives and personalities, probably because he believed they did not matter in the context of God's sovereignty. Perhaps he extended this conclusion to his own life, hence the reticence. Jacopo felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in his work, whose sheer volume is a testimony to diligence and perseverance, not boastfulness.

By the end of his life an archbishop, Jacopo wielded authority in Genoese society and here we are obligated to wonder: what sort of authority? If we take the Weberian categories of traditional, charismatic, and rational/bureaucratic authority and apply them to Jacopo's life, we must find there some basis for Jacopo's enduring significance as a writer.²⁴ Without the records needed to sustain an analysis of his activities as archbishop, we are left in the dark about Jacopo as a politician or bureaucrat. The habits of scholastic thinking pervade Jacopo's works and make it clear that by his lights he valued rationality. No saintly reputation or stories point to Jacopo as a charismatic figure of any sort. The traditional powers of a Genoese bishop had so eroded in the late thirteenth-century church that we find little sign of Jacopo being able to command political or even spiritual authority in the city, beyond arranging a doomed truce.

This book, limited to Jacopo's mind and milieu, cannot follow his subsequent reputation beyond his burial (at nearly threescore and ten) at the Dominican convent in the summer of 1298.²⁵ Jacopo's successor as archbishop, Porchetto Spinola, was quite different: an aristocratic Genoese Ghibelline, a Franciscan, and elected locally rather than selected in Rome.²⁶ We have looked at Jacopo's accuracy as a historian from a modern perspective. His successor as historian of Genoa for the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Giorgio Stella, did not cast a kindly eye on the works of his analogistic predecessors. Stella singled out Jacopo for opprobrium because he abandoned a strict year-by-year format, and he lumped Jacopo in with the

24. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Political Organization*, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1947), 324–86.

25. For the subsequent travels of his remains in Genoa and to Varazze, see Gabriella Airdi, *Jacopo da Varagine: tra santi e mercanti* (Genoa, 1998), 147–50. The Dominican convent was demolished in the 1820s and 1830s, before the age of photography.

26. For the detail on his burial, see Giorgio Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi (Bologna, 1975), 70.

others as having a crude and simple style.²⁷ The Renaissance humanist historians did not value Jacopo's works, so far from classical models in style and subject matter. It is a pity that Stella did not recognize the genius in Jacopo da Varagine (and Jacopo Doria). Jacopo was a pioneer in social history who did not follow Doria into statistical details on fleets and taxes but instead wrote about family life and slavery. Studying Jacopo in the context of all his works, his Genoa, and the original habits of his mind enables us to make a fresh start, to begin his posthumous reputation anew.

What have I been able to demonstrate about these themes? A red thread through Jacopo's writings and career is his single-minded concern for preparing preachers across Europe. We should expect no less from a lifelong Dominican. Jacopo emphasized family life because he believed that good relatives made good male citizens, the only kind he could prescribe for his Genoa. This bias left women in the political shadows, in a way trapped between the paradigm of Mary as the perfect wife and mother and the commonplace sinners detected every day. Though Jacopo was born in a city with apparently no resident Jews, his travels across Europe and his wide reading had somehow disposed him to see the Jews as archetypes for the evils of this world. No Jews in Genoa were harmed by this, but all the preaching that resulted from his helpful work must have done real damage to Jews across Europe for the centuries Jacopo's reputation lasted. The percentage of slaves in the Genoese population, in Jacopo's lifetime only a few percent, but that would increase over the next century, made Genoa a slave-owning society rather than a slave culture like ancient Rome or the antebellum American South. Jacopo considered the relationship between master and slave to be important enough to merit a section in his chronicle, making him (alas) one of the first medieval theorists on slavery.

If we knew more about Jacopo's archiepiscopal career, we would have a better sense of the presumably substantial role he played in Genoa's history. There are just enough personal references in the chronicle to be sure that Jacopo was Genoese, so a Genoese mind to study, and all the evidence from his prolific thoughts. Unfortunately we have only a handful of potential Genoese candidates for a comparative study. Giovanni Balbi, his contemporary, fellow Dominican and author of the *Catholicon*, the greatest and best-known Latin dictionary in the European Middle Ages, was even more reticent about

27. *Ibid.*, 2, but in tacit homage to Jacopo, Stella was quite careful to begin his own work in 1299 and did not trespass on Jacopo (69).

personal details than Jacopo. And it is hard to tell what a vast dictionary can reveal about the mind of its compiler, since his predecessors and the canons of the genre severely circumscribed his laborious drudgery. The Anonymous Poet of Genoa, writing in the local dialect certainly from the 1290s, left behind hundreds of poems of varying length and uniformly low quality, at least compared to what was passing for poetry across Italy in the 1290s, a high bar to be sure.²⁸ Genoa was not a city teeming with visual artists, saints, or writers; its heroic figures were merchants and warriors. Since Genoa had no university, the Dominican convent seems to have been the leading center of education. The fortunate few Genoese able to receive a university education have left behind only one notable alumnus—Jacopo, who bears the burden of being the exemplar of the Genoese scholastic mind.

Jacopo's mental tool kit, to use a modern expression that would no doubt have appealed to him, consistently revealed an intellect suffused in the Bible, a text he was even more deeply steeped in as he grew older. What little classical education he ever possessed seems to have faded from his mind over time, probably because it was an increasingly unnecessary veneer to his faith. The classics of the Latin church fathers, and later authorities from Gregory the Great to Bernard of Clairvaux, were always at his fingertips. Jacopo deeply respected his predecessors but seems to have drawn a line somewhere around 1200 and was not comfortable revealing that he had in fact read anything written in his century except for the reference works of fellow Dominicans like Vincent of Beauvais or Bartholomew of Trent. The notable absences are of course Albertus Magnus and Aquinas. We know Jacopo read the previous annalists of Genoa from Caffaro to his contemporary Jacopo Doria. What we learned about the quality of this reading was not always reassuring. After all, what would a mind capable of deprecating Guglielmo Boccanegra or misdating the Battle of Meloria have learned from the subtleties of Aquinas? Jacopo gives the impression of a very busy man who read hastily. Hence he best understood those mediocre books for which it mattered little how fast one read them, and a book like the Bible, which he had reread for decades. The books he knew well, like Augustine's *City of God*, he knew very well. In almost everything Jacopo wrote, he was trying to emulate the prolific Augustine. We can tell how much Jacopo relied on his authorities because he scrupulously cites them, and by the habits of his time he was nothing like a plagiarist.

28. The curious reader may consult the standard collected works, Anonimo Genovese, *Poesie*, ed. Luciana Cocito (Rome, 1970). He was no Dante.

Amid all the patient and creative labor of packaging the wisdom of his time to help preachers (and maybe the few laypeople capable of reading his *Legenda Aurea* and chronicle in Latin), Jacopo also showed enough originality to justify our attention to him.²⁹ The congregations of Jacopo's primary audience (preachers), in our terms the end users of his sermons, absorbed Jacopo's thought for centuries across Europe, and through them his influence helped to shape how Christianity developed. Jacopo's interesting mind and popularity in subsequent centuries place him in the first rank of thirteenth-century European intellectuals, a distinction he earned by hard work. He did not earn a place on the calendar of saints, in the college of cardinals, or among the ranks of famous Genoese statesmen. I do not think these distinctions interested him so much as having the reward of readers, and them he still has. Jacopo da Varagine used his talents well.

29. That Jacopo had a wider reading public than we might think is hinted at by the translation of the *LA* into Tuscan in the early fourteenth century; see *Leggenda Aurea: Volgarizzamento toscano del trecento*, ed. Arrigo Levasti (Florence, 1924–26).

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